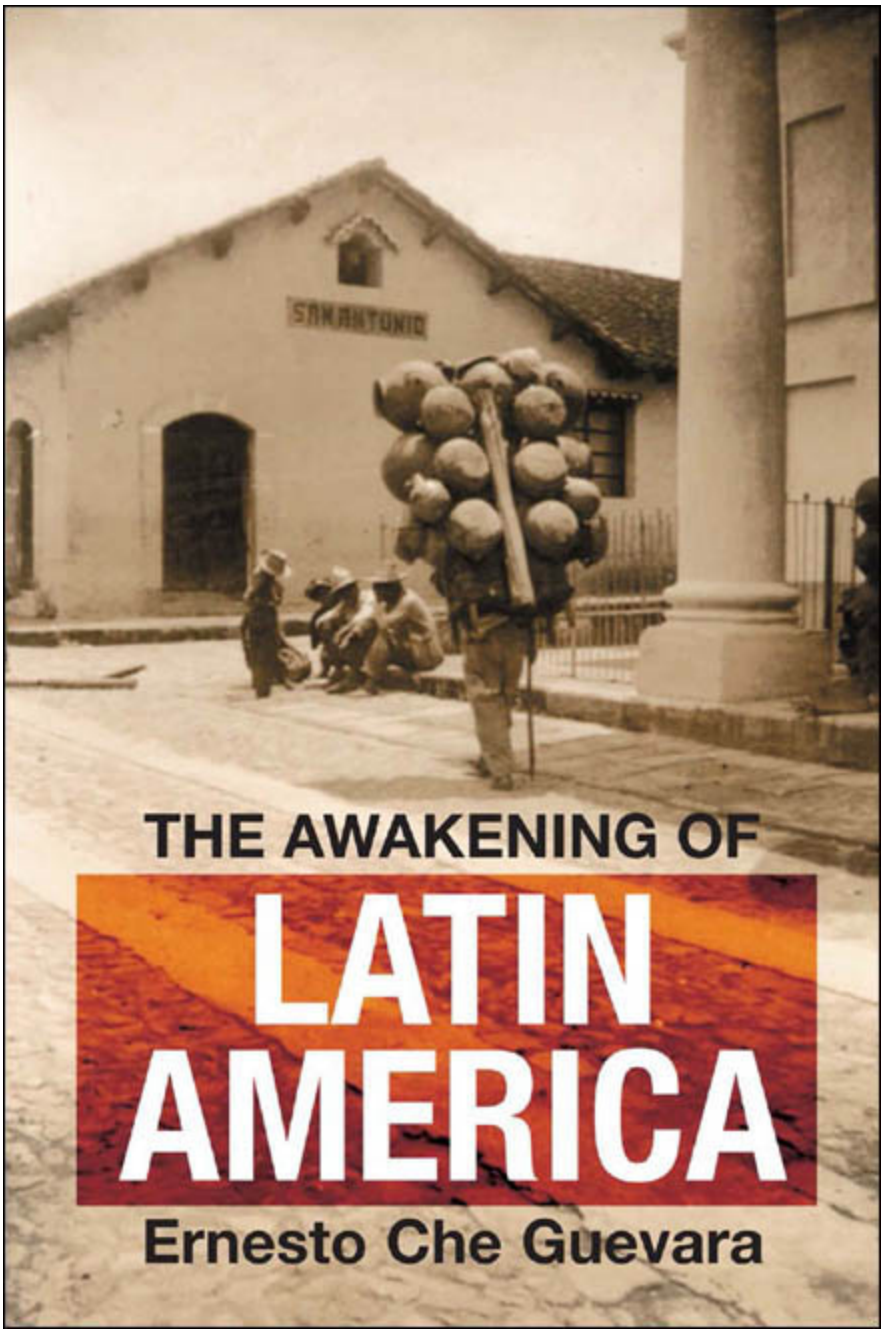
THE AWAKENING OF LATIN AMERICA

Ernesto Che Guevara


SANANTONIO
THE AWAKENING OF
LATIN AMERICA
Ernesto Che Guevara

THE AWAKENING OF LATIN AMERICA

CHE GUEVARA PUBLISHING PROJECT

THE DIARIES:

The Motorcycle Diaries (1952)

Latin America Diaries (1953–55)

Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War (1956–58)

Diary of a Combatant (1956–58)

Congo Diary (1965)

The Bolivian Diary (1966–67)

Che: The Diaries of Ernesto Che Guevara

ALSO AVAILABLE:

Che Guevara Reader

Global Justice: Liberation and Socialism

Self-Portrait: A Photographic and Literary Memoir

Marx & Engels: A Biographical Introduction

Guerrilla Warfare

Our America and Theirs

THE AWAKENING OF LATIN AMERICA

A classic anthology of Che Guevara's writings on Latin America

Ernesto Che Guevara

Edited by María del Carmen Ariet García

Ocean Press
www.oceanbooks.com.au

Copyright © 2013 Che Guevara Studies Center and Aleida March
Copyright © 2013 Ocean Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Poetry translated by Manuel Talens and Sue Ashdown.

ISBN: 978-1-921700-91-0
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2011943982

First edition published in 2013
Published in Spanish as *América Latina: Despertar de un Continente*

PUBLISHED BY OCEAN PRESS
PO Box 1015, North Melbourne, VIC 3051, Australia
E-mail: info@oceanbooks.com.au

OCEAN PRESS TRADE DISTRIBUTORS

United States: **Consortium Book Sales and Distribution**
Tel: 1-800-283 3572 www.cbsd.com

Canada: **Publishers Group Canada**
Tel: 1-800-663 5714 E-mail: customerservice@raincoast.com

Australia and New Zealand: **Palgrave Macmillan**
Tel: 1-300-135 113 E-mail: customer.service@macmillan.com.au

UK and Europe: **Turnaround Publisher Services**
Tel: (44) 020-8829 3000 E-mail: orders@turnaround-uk.com

Cuba and Latin America: **Ocean Sur**
E-mail: info@oceansur.com

www.oceanbooks.com.au
info@ceanbooks.com.au

Contents

Ernesto Che Guevara: Biographical Note

Chronology of Ernesto Che Guevara

Editor's Preface

Introduction

María del Carmen Ariet García

PART ONE

Discovering Latin America 1950–56

Introduction

Travels in Argentina (1950)

Excerpts from "The Bicycle Diaries"

First Trip through Latin America (1951–52)

Excerpts from "The Motorcycle Diaries"

A Second Look at Latin America (1953–56)

Excerpts from "Latin America Diaries"

Doctors and their Environment

The Role of the Doctor in Latin America

Reading Notes

Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España by Bernal Díaz del Castillo

La crónica del Perú by Pedro Cieza de León

La araucana by Alonso de Ercilla

Facundo (Civilización o barbarie) by Domingo F. Sarmiento

El Evangelio y el Syllabus y Un dualismo imposible by Dr. Lorenzo Montúfar

Martín Fierro by José Hernández

Obras escogidas by Enrique Gómez Carrillo

Martí: Raíz y ala del libertador de Cuba by Vicente Sáenz

Breve historia de México by José Vasconcelos

Trayectoria de Goethe by Alfonso Reyes

La rebelión de los colgados by Bruno Traven

Biografía del Caribe by Germán Arciniegas

Mamita Yunai by Carlos Luis Fallas

Canto General by Pablo Neruda

Guatemala: la democracia y el imperio by Juan José Arévalo

El hechicero by Carlos Solórzano

Journalism (1953–54)

"The View from the Banks of the Giant of Rivers"

"Machu-Picchu: An Enigma in Stone of the Americas"

"The Dilemma of Guatemala"

"The Workers of the United States: Friends or Enemies?"

Poems (unpublished)

To the Bolivian Miners

Who Cares?

Spain in America

A Tear for You

Invitation to the Road

Uaxactún... Sleeps

Selected Letters (1953–56)

Books Read in Adolescence

PART TWO
Latin America from Within (1956–65)

Introduction

1956–58
The Revolutionary War in Cuba

Articles

“How Cuban the World Seems to Us”

“Our Soul is Full of Compassion”

Interview

Interview by the Argentine Journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti

1959

Article

Latin America from the Afro-Asian Perspective

Speech

Speech to the College of Medicine, Havana

Interview

Interview for Radio Rivadavia, Argentina

Letter

1960

Articles

“Regional Disarmament and Other Acts of Submission”

“Don’t be Stupid, Buddy, and Other Warnings”

"Knee Bends, International Organizations and Genuflections"
"Caracero, the Argentine Vote and Other Rhinoceroses"
"Ydígoras, Somoza and Other Proofs of Friendship"
"The Marshall Plan, the Eisenhower Plan and Other Plans"
"Nixon, Eisenhower, Hagerty and Other Warnings"
"Accusations at the OAS and United Nations and Other Stabs"
"The 'Court of Miracles' and Other Devices used by the OAS"
"A Tiny Bit is a Big Enough Sample and Other Short Stories"

Speeches

Speech to the Latin American Youth Congress, Havana
In Support of the Declaration of Havana, Camagüey
Farewell to the International Volunteer Work Brigades

Selected Letters

1961

Article

Cuba: Historical Exception or Vanguard in the Anticolonial Struggle?

Speeches

"Economics Cannot be Separated from Politics." First intervention at the CIES Conference, Punta del Este
"The Real Road to Development." Second intervention at the CIES Conference, Punta del Este
Cuban Television interview about the Alliance for Progress and the CIES Conference in Punta del Este

Letter

1962

Articles

“Tactics and Strategy for the Latin American Revolution”
“El Patojo”

Speeches

The Cuban Revolution’s Influence in Latin America
Speech to the Argentines Living in Havana

1963

Article

“Guerrilla Warfare: A Method”

Letter

1964

Speech

Response to the Attacks against Cuba in the UN General Assembly, New York

Letter

Reading Lists (Cuba 1956–65)

PART THREE

The Americas United: Revolutionary Internationalism (1965–67)

Introduction

Congo Diary. Excerpt from the epilogue

Message to the Tricontinental: “Create two, three... many Vietnams”

Bolivian Diary. Excerpts

Documents from Bolivia

- Communiqué No. 1: To the Bolivian People (March 27, 1967)
- Communiqué No. 2: To the Bolivian People (April 14, 1967)
- Communiqué No. 3: To the Bolivian People (May 1967)
- Communiqué No. 4: To the Bolivian People (June 1967)
- Communiqué No. 5: To the Bolivian Miners (June 1967)
- Instructions to Urban Cadres (January 22, 1967)

Reading Lists (1965–67)

Reading Plan for Bolivia

Index

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

Biographical Note

One of *Time* magazine's "icons of the century," Ernesto Guevara de la Serna was born in Rosario, Argentina, on June 14, 1928. He made several trips around Latin America during and immediately after his studies at medical school in Buenos Aires, including his 1951–52 journey with Alberto Granado, on the unreliable Norton motorbike described in his early journal *The Motorcycle Diaries.*

He was already becoming involved in political activity and living in Guatemala when, in 1954, the elected government of Jacobo Árbenz was overthrown in a CIA-organized military operation. Ernesto escaped to Mexico, profoundly radicalized.

Following up on a contact made in Guatemala, Guevara sought out the group of exiled Cuban revolutionaries in Mexico City. In July 1955, he met Fidel Castro and immediately enlisted in the guerrilla expedition to overthrow Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. The Cubans nicknamed him "Che," a popular form of address in Argentina.

On November 25, 1956, Guevara set sail for Cuba aboard the cabin cruiser *Granma* as the doctor to the guerrilla group that began the revolutionary armed struggle in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains. Within several months, he was appointed by Fidel Castro as the first Rebel Army commander, though he continued ministering medically to wounded guerrilla fighters and captured soldiers from Batista's army.

In September 1958, Guevara played a decisive role in the military defeat of Batista after he and Camilo Cienfuegos led separate guerrilla columns westward from the Sierra Maestra.

After Batista fled on January 1, 1959, Guevara became a key leader of the new revolutionary government, first as head of the Department of Industry of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform; then as president of

the National Bank. In February 1961 he became minister of industry. He was also a central leader of the political organization that in 1965 became the Communist Party of Cuba.

Apart from these responsibilities, Guevara represented the Cuban revolutionary government around the world, heading numerous delegations and speaking at the United Nations and other international forums in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the socialist bloc countries. He earned a reputation as a passionate and articulate spokesperson for Third World peoples, most famously at the 1961 conference at Punta del Este in Uruguay, where he denounced US President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress.

As had been his intention since joining the Cuban revolutionary movement, Guevara left Cuba in April 1965, initially to lead a Cuban-organized guerrilla mission to support the revolutionary struggle in the Congo, Africa. He returned to Cuba secretly in December 1965 to prepare another Cuban-organized guerrilla force for Bolivia. Arriving in Bolivia in November 1966, Guevara's plan was to challenge that country's military dictatorship and eventually to instigate a revolutionary movement that would extend throughout the continent of Latin America. The journal he kept during the Bolivian campaign became known as *The Bolivian Diary.* Che was wounded and captured by US-trained and run Bolivian counterinsurgency troops on October 8, 1967. The following day he was executed and his body hidden.

Che Guevara's remains were finally discovered in 1997 and returned to Cuba. A memorial was built at Santa Clara in central Cuba, where he had won a major military battle during the revolutionary war.

Chronology of Ernesto Che Guevara

June 14, 1928 Ernesto Guevara is born in Rosario, Argentina, of parents Ernesto Guevara Lynch and Celia de la Serna; he will be the eldest of five children.

January–July 1952 Ernesto Guevara travels around Latin America with his friend Alberto Granado.

March 10, 1952 General Fulgencio Batista carries out a coup d'état in Cuba.

July 6, 1953 After graduating as a doctor in March, Ernesto Guevara sets off again to travel through Latin America. He visits Bolivia, observing the aftermath of the 1952 revolution in that country.

July 26, 1953 Fidel Castro leads an unsuccessful armed attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba, launching the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Batista regime.

December 1953 Ernesto Guevara meets a group of Cuban survivors of the Moncada attack in San José, Costa Rica.

December 24, 1953 Ernesto Guevara arrives in Guatemala, then under the popularly elected government of Jacobo Árbenz.

January–June 1954 While in Guatemala, he studies Marxism and becomes involved in political activities, meeting exiled Cuban revolutionaries.

August 1954 Mercenary troops backed by the CIA enter Guatemala City and begin massacring Árbenz supporters.

September 21, 1954 Ernesto Guevara arrives in Mexico City after fleeing Guatemala. He gets a job at the Central Hospital.

July 1955 Ernesto Guevara meets Fidel Castro soon after the latter arrives in exile in Mexico City after his release from prison in Cuba. He

immediately agrees to join the planned guerrilla expedition to Cuba. The Cubans nickname him “Che,” an Argentine term of greeting.

June 24, 1956 Che is arrested as part of a roundup by Mexican police of exiled Cuban revolutionaries.

November 25, 1956 Eighty-two combatants, including Che Guevara as troop doctor, set sail for Cuba from Tuxpan, Mexico, aboard the small cabin cruiser *Granma*.

December 2, 1956 The *Granma* reaches Cuba at Las Coloradas beach in Oriente province, but the rebels are surprised by Batista’s troops at Alegría de Pío and dispersed.

December 21, 1956 Che’s group (led by Juan Almeida) reunites with Fidel Castro and his group, and they move deeper into the Sierra Maestra mountains.

February 17, 1957 *New York Times* journalist Herbert Matthews interviews Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra. The same day, the first meeting is held between the urban underground and the guerrillas of the July 26 Movement since the start of the revolutionary war.

March 13, 1957 A group of students from the Revolutionary Directorate attack the Presidential Palace and seize a major Havana radio station. Student leader José Antonio Echeverría is killed in this attack.

May 27–28, 1957 The battle of El Uvero takes place, in which Che Guevara stands out among the combatants.

July 12, 1957 The rebels issue the Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra calling for a broad political front against General Batista and support for the Rebel Army.

July 21, 1957 Che Guevara is selected to lead the newly established second column (Column Four) of the Rebel Army and is promoted to the rank of commander.

August 31, 1958 Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos lead invasion columns west from the Sierra Maestra toward central Cuba, opening new battle fronts in Las Villas province.

November 15, 1958 Fidel leaves the Sierra Maestra to direct the Rebel Army's final offensive in Santiago de Cuba. By the end of the month, Batista's elite troops are defeated at the battle of Guisa.

December 28, 1958 Che Guevara's Column Eight initiates the battle of Santa Clara and succeeds in taking control of the city within a few days.

January 1, 1959 Batista flees Cuba. Fidel enters Santiago de Cuba as the military regime collapses. Santa Clara falls to the Rebel Army.

January 2, 1959 Fidel Castro calls for a general strike and the country is paralyzed. The Rebel Army columns led by Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos reach Havana.

January 8, 1959 Fidel Castro arrives in Havana.

February 9, 1959 Che Guevara is declared a Cuban citizen.

June 12–September 8, 1959 Che Guevara travels through Europe, Africa, and Asia; he signs various commercial, technical, and cultural agreements on behalf of the revolutionary government.

October 7, 1959 Che Guevara is designated head of the Department of Industry of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

November 25, 1959 Che Guevara is appointed president of the National Bank of Cuba.

March 17, 1960 President Eisenhower approves a CIA plan to overthrow the revolutionary government and to train a Cuban exile army to invade Cuba.

October 21, 1960 Che Guevara leaves on an extended visit to the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, China and North Korea.

January 3, 1961 Washington breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba.

February 23, 1961 The revolutionary government establishes the Ministry of Industry, headed by Che Guevara.

April 16, 1961 At a mass rally Fidel Castro proclaims the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.

April 17–19, 1961 One thousand five hundred Cuban-born mercenaries, organized and backed by the United States, invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs but are defeated within 72 hours. Che Guevara is sent to command troops in Pinar del Río province.

August 8, 1961 Che Guevara condemns US President Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" in a fiery speech to the Organization of American States (OAS) Economic and Social Conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay, as head of Cuba's delegation. Cuba is subsequently expelled from the OAS.

February 3, 1962 President Kennedy orders a total trade embargo against Cuba.

August 27–September 7, 1962 Che Guevara makes his second visit to the Soviet Union.

October 1962 An international crisis breaks out after US spy planes discover Soviet missile installations in Cuba. Cuba responds by mobilizing its population for defense. Che Guevara is assigned to lead forces in Pinar del Río province in preparation for an imminent US invasion.

July 3–17, 1963 Che Guevara visits Algeria, recently independent under the government of Ahmed Ben Bella.

March 1964 Che Guevara meets with Tamara Bunke ("Tania") to discuss her mission to move to Bolivia in anticipation of a future guerrilla expedition.

March 25, 1964 Che Guevara addresses the UN Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, Switzerland.

November 4–9, 1964 Che Guevara visits the Soviet Union.

December 11, 1964 Che Guevara addresses the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, condemning the US war in Vietnam and supporting independence movements from Puerto Rico to the Congo.

December 17, 1964 Che Guevara leaves New York for Africa, where he visits Algeria, Mali, Congo (Brazzaville), Guinea, Ghana, Tanzania and Egypt.

February 24, 1965 Che Guevara addresses the Second Economic Seminar of the Organization of Afro-Asian Solidarity in Algiers, controversially urging the socialist countries to do more to support Third World struggles for independence.

March 14, 1965 Che Guevara returns to Cuba and shortly afterwards drops from public view.

April 1, 1965 Che Guevara delivers a farewell letter to Fidel Castro. He subsequently leaves Cuba on a Cuban-sponsored internationalist mission in the Congo, Africa, entering through Tanzania.

April 18, 1965 In answer to questions about Che Guevara's whereabouts, Fidel Castro tells foreign reporters that Che "will always be where he is most useful to the revolution."

June 16, 1965 Fidel Castro announces Che Guevara's location will be revealed "when Commander Guevara wants it known."

October 3, 1965 Fidel Castro publicly reads Che Guevara's letter of farewell at a meeting to announce the central committee of the newly formed Communist Party of Cuba.

November 21, 1965 Che Guevara leaves the Congo, and begins writing up his account of the African mission, which he describes as a "failure."

December 1965 Fidel Castro arranges for Che Guevara to return to Cuba in secret. Che Guevara prepares for a Cuban-sponsored guerrilla expedition to Bolivia.

January 3-14, 1966 The Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America is held in Havana.

March 1966 The first Cuban combatants arrive in Bolivia to begin advance preparations for a guerrilla movement. Tania has already been working there since 1964.

July 1966 Che Guevara meets with Cuban volunteers selected for the mission to Bolivia at a training camp in Cuba's Pinar del Río province.

November 4, 1966 Che Guevara arrives in La Paz, Bolivia, in disguise, using the assumed name of Ramón Benítez.

November 7, 1966 Che Guevara and several others arrive at the farm on the Ñacahuazú River where the guerrilla detachment will be based. Che makes his first entry in his diary of the Bolivia campaign.

December 31, 1966 Che Guevara meets with the secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, Mario Monje. There is disagreement over perspectives for the planned guerrilla movement.

March 23, 1967 The first guerrilla military action takes place in a successful ambush of Bolivian Army troops.

March 25, 1967 The formation of the Bolivian National Liberation Army (ELN) is publicly announced.

April 16, 1967 Publication of Che Guevara's "Message to the Tricontinental," which calls for the creation of "two, three, many Vietnams."

May 1967 US Special Forces arrive in Bolivia to train counterinsurgency troops of the Bolivian Army.

June 23-24, 1967 The Bolivian Army massacres miners and their families at the Siglo XX mines. This becomes known as the San Juan massacre.

July 1, 1967 President Barrientos publicly announces Che Guevara's presence in Bolivia.

July 31–August 10, 1967 The Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) conference is held in Havana. The conference supports guerrilla movements throughout Latin America. Che Guevara is elected honorary chair.

September 26, 1967 The guerrilla unit falls into a Bolivian Army ambush at Quebrada de Batán, near La Higuera.

October 8, 1967 The remaining 17 guerrillas are trapped by army troops and conduct a desperate battle in the Quebrada del Yuro (El Yuro ravine). Che Guevara is seriously wounded and captured.

October 9, 1967 Che Guevara and two other captured guerrillas (Willy and Chino) are executed by Bolivian soldiers following instructions from the

Bolivian government and Washington. The remains of Che Guevara and the other guerrillas are secretly buried in Bolivia.

October 15, 1967 In a television appearance Fidel Castro confirms news of Che Guevara's death and declares three days of official mourning in Cuba. October 8 is designated the Day of the Heroic Guerrilla.

October 18, 1967 Fidel Castro delivers a memorial speech for Che Guevara in Havana's Revolution Plaza before an audience of almost one million people.

July 1968 Che Guevara's *Bolivian Diary* is published in Cuba and distributed free of charge to the Cuban people. It is simultaneously published in many countries to counter the CIA campaign to discredit the revolutionary movement in Latin America. With an introduction by Fidel Castro, it becomes an instant international bestseller.

July 1997 Che Guevara's remains are finally located and returned to Cuba to be buried along with the bodies of other guerrilla fighters found in Bolivia in a new memorial built in Santa Clara.

Editor’s Preface

After spending a night with his friends, the Granados, in Córdoba at the beginning of the 1950s, young Ernesto Guevara de la Serna became determined to learn everything he could about Latin America and dreamed of exploring the entire region.

The idea grew to incorporate new plans and different companions until, at the end of 1951, he and Alberto Granado set out together. Emulating Don Quixote and his trusty Rocinante, the two travelers made the trip on a motorbike. They weren’t as lucky as their legendary predecessor, however, for their steed broke down soon after they had embarked on their adventure.

Nevertheless, no difficulties, doubts or broken-down motorbikes, abandoned at the start of their journey, could sway them from their purpose, and for Ernesto the trip became the first experience in a life-long passion.

This anthology covers three periods Che’s life, years which reveal most of his ideas and thinking about Latin America:

1950–55: Discovering Latin America
1956–64: Latin America from Within
1965–67: The Americas United: Revolutionary Internationalism

In each of these periods, Che faced extraordinary challenges, but he persevered, his iron will ensuring he continued in his endeavor to create the great homeland of Latin America of which Simón Bolívar and José Martí had dreamed.

This book forms part of the project of the Che Guevara Studies Center (Havana) and Ocean Press to present Che’s thinking and legacy, in his own words, from his youth to his final days in Bolivia: his perspective on and his vision for Latin America and its peoples—for whom he gave his life and in whom his memory lives on.

Introduction

My mouth narrates what my eyes have seen…[1]

Recalling a verse by the Argentine writer Sabato, with the pleasure he always got from his constant companion, poetry, Ernesto Guevara de la Serna began his first journey as a determined adventurer in January 1950. He set out to discover the northern part of his native Argentina, the reality of which he had only so far caught a brief glimpse.

From the moment he decided to explore Latin America, Che regarded this as an extremely important obligation. Sadly, only a few of the pages of the diary he kept of this trip around Argentina have been preserved, but what we have shows a young man's inner world full of dreams and philosophical ponderings, in a never-ending search for truth. This search would lead him, throughout his life, to try to feel the pulse of the people of Latin America.

The thousands of miles he traversed through arid lands, both beautiful and not so beautiful, opened his eyes to a reality he encountered everywhere: the backwardness in which the vast majority of the peoples of Latin America were mired, condemned to poverty and helplessness.

Barely a year after his initial exploratory trip, Che embarked on an experience that made a lasting impression on him. In that brief period of time, his social awareness had sharpened as he questioned everything he encountered. He signed on as a nurse on ships that took him to Caribbean countries and as a health officer in the port area of Buenos Aires—events he never documented but which fed his inquiring mind and led him to undertake further adventures.

His next travels were far more extensive and adventurous, covering a large part of Latin America. On that journey, he was not alone but accompanied by his friend Alberto Granado, who shared his goals and

dreams. They set out on an unreliable old motorcycle that had to be abandoned in Chile.

Ernesto's life-long habit of writing down everything he experienced shows the lasting effect that trip had on him as a young man. Unconsciously, he developed a distinctive style in the accounts of his travels as he was driven to explore unknown lands, experiences that changed him more than he could have imagined.

His travels through Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela led him to delve into truths that he had sensed but never corroborated. He acknowledges his limitations as a writer, but his diaries clearly convey his search and show how objective and remarkably perceptive he was.

From Chile on, his constant theme was injustice: first, in the issue of health care, about which he already knew something, and then in regard to the miners, especially a family of communist miners he met, with whom he felt "more brotherhood than ever before." Faced with so much injustice, he noted the need for fundamental change. Given governments' failure to act and the merciless exploitation to which the poor were subjected, in his first political commentary he expressed the need to shake off the "uncomfortable Yankee friend" in order to achieve sovereign and independent nationhood.

His comments about Peru were even more significant, because there he encountered a problem of which he had previously been unaware: that of the continent's indigenous peoples. At Machu-Picchu, he was struck by the conquistadors' barbarism in contrast to the incredible richness of the destroyed indigenous culture. There at Machu-Picchu he first appreciated the immensity and vastness of indigenous culture and architecture, which stimulated a desire to learn more about the conquest that had cruelly subjugated the peoples of a continent in the interests of feudal Spain.

On his birthday in June 1952, six months after he set out on his trip with Alberto Granado on the motorbike, in his account entitled "Saint Guevara's Day" (an ironic invocation of Peronism) he examined the many ways in which he was beginning to get a sense of the united Latin America that Bolívar had sought.

Caracas, the "city of the eternal spring," marked the end of his long journey, and there he was exposed to another issue about which he had been very ignorant—the position of blacks in a white society, another aspect of the racist and deforming impact of colonialism.

Che concludes *The Motorcycle Diaries* with what he calls “A note in the margin.” Here he attempts to synthesize his experiences, saying he is not trying to prove any particular thesis, but simply describing what he felt was exerting an ever greater spiritual force on the self-confessed and ironic “eclectic dissembler of doctrine and psychoanalyst of dogma,” as he refers to himself, a man who had taken a path that would lead him to fight to transform the world.

He had yet to identify all the elements of his vision of revolution—the role of the popular masses, the question of the seizure of power, his humanism and, above all, his Latin Americanism. But he had already developed certain convictions that meant he was ready to throw himself into the struggle alongside the masses of people, even if it meant sacrificing his life.

Some time would pass and many events would take place in Ernesto’s life before he would write similar phrases with the same sentiment. He had to take a second look at Latin America. In *Otra vez* [Once Again][2]—the title he gave his diary of that second journey—he develops the same themes.

In July 1953, after completing his medical studies, Ernesto set out with Calica Ferrer, another old friend, heading first to Bolivia to learn about the revolutionary process that the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) had initiated in 1952. He was interested in the Bolivian experience because, apart from the Peronist movement in his own country—about which he was somewhat skeptical—he had not witnessed any actual revolution and was curious to see how the masses participated in the process.

The Bolivian revolution did not particularly inspire him, as he clearly recognized the political and ideological weakness of the leaders of the movement and foresaw a process of attrition when the goals they had set themselves initially were not achieved; but he did observe the potential strength of the people, especially the super-exploited Bolivian miners.

Naturally, the US government’s attempts to crush the Bolivian revolution, immersed as it was in the Cold War, did not escape the notice of the young Ernesto Guevara. This US pressure would eventually lead Bolivians to a dead end where they were forced to abandon their nationalist project.

Ernesto decided to move on. In Ecuador, he discussed his experiences in Bolivia with a group of friends, who invited him to go to Central America with them to learn about the Guatemalan revolutionary process. Under President Jacobo Árbenz, Guatemala was generating great hope among the most advanced Latin American intellectuals and political leaders.

It was in those circumstances that he wrote a letter to his family including a revealing comment: “In Guatemala, I shall improve myself and achieve what I lack to be a true revolutionary.” He knew enough about Central America before arriving in Guatemala to understand what US penetration in the region meant and to conclude that the only possible solution was a revolution that challenged the feudal bourgeoisie and foreign capital in order to achieve real justice for the people. Understanding this reality, he saw that the much-touted Pan-Americanism was a false substitute for real Latin American unity, and the only thing it had achieved was an overwhelming disparity between rich and poor, and the economic and political subjugation of the weak countries of the South. History had already tragically underlined this truth with US interference in the Panama Canal, the assassination of Augusto Sandino in Nicaragua, and the United Fruit Company’s pitiless exploitation of workers in Central America—all of which were carried out in the name of Pan-American “unity.”

Ernesto saw that Pan-Americanism and imperialism went hand in hand, and that Pan-Americanism—wittingly or unwittingly—acted as the tool of imperialism, which meant the accumulation and export of capital, monopoly concentration and the exploitation of countries producing raw materials. When its interests so required, imperialism made demands that either indirectly or directly forced Latin American nations to adopt US-style democracy.

For this reason Guatemala proved to be a turning point in Ernesto Guevara’s intellectual and ideological evolution as an “aspiring revolutionary.” Recognizing the conceptual and programmatic limitations of the Guatemalan process, he nevertheless considered it an authentic revolution, one worth risking his life for.

This was an enriching period of his life, in which his experiences stimulated the need to study more, especially philosophy, which he had earlier tackled enthusiastically.

Guatemala was a revolutionary school for him, but also a source of frustration when the revolution was defeated in June 1954. “The crushing of another Latin American dream” was how he referred to the shameful plot between the US State Department, the CIA and the puppet governments of Central America against the Guatemalan government, which was simply attempting to transform its feudal economy through a moderate agrarian reform law, but whose real “crime” was to seize land that the United Fruit Company considered to be its property.

Such policies of a legitimate, popularly elected government were enough for the CIA to launch an international campaign portraying Guatemala as a nation ruled by “international communism” and which, therefore, provided a clear threat to peace and security in the hemisphere. Less than a year after the agrarian reform was implemented, the CIA prepared to isolate Guatemala diplomatically, promoted internal subversion, created artificial conflicts with Guatemala’s neighbors and trained a shock force of mercenaries ready to invade the country from Honduras.

Events in Guatemala served to strengthen Ernesto’s anti-imperialism, evident in remarks in his letters and travel diary about the role the United States had played in overthrowing the Árbenz administration. He also consciously affirmed that revolution was the only way to achieve “the rule of justice in Latin America” and that the unity of the region was absolutely necessary. He also reiterated that he saw himself as belonging to Latin America, and not just to the country of his birth, Argentina.

In Guatemala, he made contact with a group of exiled Cuban revolutionaries, including some of those who had participated in the July 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks to challenge the Batista dictatorship. For the first time, Ernesto learned about the goals of the July 26 Movement and its leader, Fidel Castro, who was then in prison in Cuba for having led the attack in Santiago de Cuba.

Later, in Mexico, Ernesto encountered the Cubans again and met Fidel, who had been amnestied and released from prison, arriving in Mexico in June 1955. Ernesto’s diary includes the entry: “One political event is meeting Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolutionary, an intelligent young fellow who is very sure of himself and extraordinarily audacious; I think we hit it off well.”[3]

From that moment Ernesto Guevara—now known as “Che,” a nickname the Cubans bestowed upon him—became irrevocably linked with the Cuban revolution in what was to be one of the most enriching periods of his life. This meeting enabled him to achieve what he had dreamed of from a young age.

While in Mexico, he analyzed the factors leading to the overthrow of the Guatemalan revolution. He also examined how his experiences had served to broaden and sharpen his political awareness, helping him map out his future, which he now saw as entwined with that of humanity. This was a definitive moment in the development of his humanist thinking.

He outlined in greater depth the reasons why he saw that Latin Americanism and imperialism were in eternal conflict. His analysis was now reinforced by his more profound study of Marxism—especially Karl Marx’s political economy. He considered these studies absolutely necessary for understanding Latin America’s ills and how the continent would solve these problems through socialism, even though he was not yet entirely clear about what that meant.

After taking part in Cuba’s liberation, he expected to go on to fulfill a commitment he had already expressed in a letter to his mother in April 1954, when he remarked, “the Americas will be the theater of my adventures in a way that is much more significant than I would have believed.”[4]

In Cuba, he would have the unique experience of being part of a people’s vanguard that wagered everything on winning their country’s independence through the means he considered fundamental: armed struggle. Che summed up his ideas in the midst of the Cuban revolution in an interview with his compatriot Jorge Ricardo Masetti: “I am here [in Cuba] simply because I believe that the only way to rid the Americas of dictators is to overthrow them—helping to bring about their fall by whatever means necessary—the more direct the better.” When asked if his participation in the internal affairs of a country that was not his own could be seen as meddling, he added, “First of all, I consider my country to be not only Argentina but the entire Americas. My country’s history is as glorious as that of [José] Martí, and it is in his land precisely that I abide by his doctrine.”[5]

The combatant who pursued chimeras

A new period in Che's life now began. Participating in the revolutionary struggle in Cuba would be the first step in his aspiration to build a new Latin America. In the revolutionary struggle in Cuba, he not only tested himself as a combatant but he also discovered how a revolutionary process could bring about basic structural change in society.

Cuba, for Che, represented a new step in the development of the continent-wide Latin American peoples' struggle to achieve their definitive liberation. The awakening of Latin America that followed the triumph of the Cuban revolution on January 1, 1959, reinforced his views on what other Latin American peoples needed to do.

As a leader of the Cuban revolution he assumed a wide range of complex tasks, and he rapidly came to be regarded as an exemplary revolutionary and Marxist. He was particularly effective in combining theory and practice, creatively enriching the latter and making a significant contribution to the economic and political elements of the socialist transition in Cuba.

In spite of his heavy workload in Cuba, Che never stopped trying to unite and strengthen the revolutionary movements elsewhere in Latin America. He recognized the similarities of the struggles, their common objectives and their common enemy. At one stage, he called together a large number of Latin American revolutionaries who wanted to learn directly from the experience of a successful revolution and who needed links that would strengthen their struggles for their countries' sovereignty. He spent long hours discussing tactics and strategy and the main principles for achieving victory. His speeches, interviews and papers from 1959 onwards reveal his deep reflection on a wide range of topics. He analyzed key economic, political and social questions, with a particular focus on the unity of the three underdeveloped continents of the world (Asia, Africa and Latin America) in what would become his Third World thesis.

After his 1959 tour of the member countries of the Bandung Pact, the predecessor of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, he wrote: "Cuba has been invited to send representatives to the new conference of Afro-Asian peoples. They will show the august meeting of their Afro-Asian brothers the truths and the pain of Latin America. Their participation is no

coincidence; it is the result of the historic convergence of all the oppressed peoples in this hour of liberation. They will go on to say that it is true that Cuba exists and that Fidel Castro is a man, a popular hero, not a mythological abstraction… From my new perspective of the balcony, when asked if we are allies from across the ocean, I have to respond to those hundreds of thousands of Africans and Asians who are marching toward freedom in these nuclear times: Yes, more than ever, I am one more brother from this part of the world that awaits with infinite eagerness the moment when we can consolidate the bloc that will destroy the anachronistic presence of colonial control once and for all."[6]

Cuba's ongoing example convinced him that it was absolutely necessary for Latin America to obtain political cohesion in order to defend itself in the international arena, and developed his thoughts on how the continent could achieve full liberation. He focused his attention on the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which, he pointed out in an interview with Argentine radio, "If it is [to be considered] an element of liberation for Latin America, I believe this should have already been demonstrated. Until now, I have not been aware of any such demonstration. The IMF performs an entirely different function: precisely that of ensuring that capital based outside of Latin America controls all of Latin America."[7]

Drawing on his guerrilla experience in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains and the broad scope of the Cuban revolution, he began to envisage a project of change for Latin America that included profound social and economic reforms starting with an agrarian reform, which he considered should be the first measure taken by any revolutionary Latin American government. Close coordination would be necessary between any true people's army—the unquestionable vanguard in the struggle for full liberation—and the popular masses. Together, they would obtain real independence by confronting the imperialist forces and the false democracies that held power at the time.

In 1961, to counter the Cuban revolution's undeniable achievements and example, US President Kennedy proposed a program called the Alliance for Progress, which was to provide Latin American countries with funds for promoting their development. Although that program appeared to represent a change in hemispheric relations, it proved to be nothing but a sanitized

expression of the historical economic and political hegemony of the United States in the region.

After the failure of the April 1961 Bay of Pigs mercenary attack on Cuba, the United States increasingly focused on Latin America, making foreign aid conditional on the adoption of certain internal measures in each country that would guarantee its subordination to the interests of its northern neighbor. A peace policy for Latin America was implemented that ensured stability to avoid any repetition of the Cuban revolution.

Cuba remained a thorn in Washington's side—not because it violated any hemispheric agreements, but because it had managed to solve the problems that were unsolved in many other Latin American countries. This was the challenge the United States confronted, Cuba's example proving to be more dangerous than any form of military action.

Ernesto Che Guevara was the head of the Cuban delegation to the Punta del Este, Uruguay, conference held in 1961 to discuss the Alliance for Progress. He took part in exhausting work sessions and, in his interventions, he not only explained Cuba's position but exposed the real intentions of the United States, pointing out the real path to development for Latin America.

Against all the hostility Cuba faced at the conference, Che offered support for constructive joint action so the participants in the Punta del Este conference could lay the foundation for a truly progressive plan that would benefit the majority of Latin Americans. Che highlighted the political nature of the conference and its economic dimension, and outlined the necessary parameters for any policy that sought to achieve real economic integration, stating that the real threat was posed by the international monopolies' determination to control all trade through the free trade associations.

He proposed practical measures such as a development program and the coordination of technical and financial assistance from all industrialized countries, in order to safeguard the interests of the weaker countries, and he urged that all acts of economic aggression by any members against others be outlawed. He also suggested measures to protect Latin American businesses against monopoly competition, to reduce US tariffs on the region's products and to provide direct investments with no political strings attached.

Cuba's arguments were ignored, however, and the conference resolutions focused on US economic policy with no consideration given to the requirements of Latin America's interests.

Che also took up many other issues at the Punta del Este conference. For example, he proposed changes needed in the structure of the relationships of production in order to achieve real progress. For Che, there were only two possible alternatives: the freeing of trade and the implementation of an independent economic policy combined with an independent foreign policy; or engagement in an open struggle to challenge the foreign monopolies directly.

Che insisted that the main effect of imperialist penetration in Latin America had been devastating, characterized by absolute economic backwardness, and the real cause of underdevelopment and of neocolonial dependence. The local oligarchies had failed miserably and had only exacerbated the gap between the wealthy minority and the impoverished mass of the people.

Che was absolutely convinced that the only real alternative at that historical moment of the early 1960s was to confront the enemy through armed struggle. In "Tactics and Strategy for the Latin American Revolution" and "The Cuban Revolution's Influence in Latin America" (both included in this anthology) he challenged the roots of all Latin America's social problems and warned that, in a world economically distorted by imperialism, the only solution was a political-military struggle, with the masses' true vanguard employing correct global strategies and tactics that would lead to their political triumph and victory for Latin America.[8]

Waging this necessary war, as Martí had postulated, meant taking advantage of the historical context in which it was possible to weaken imperialism's economic bases, destroy the reactionary oligarchies and to polarize the struggle. Paraphrasing Fidel's 1960 speech at the United Nations, Che argued "the only way to put an end to the philosophy of war was to cease the philosophy of plunder."[9]

May freedom be won all over Latin America

Che's concept of radical social transformation was not limited to Cuba and the interests of the Cuban revolution. His perspective was a Third World one, which had as its ultimate goal the attainment of the full emancipation of all humankind.

Latin American unity was at the heart of Che's strategy as the only way to achieve first national independence and then the definitive liberation of the entire continent. He considered Latin America to be both the most advanced and the most contradictory part of the Third World.

Before taking part in the armed struggle in the Congo and Bolivia, Che explained his strategy, underlining the inevitable nature of the revolution and expressing his determination to take initiatives that would exacerbate social contradictions so as to pave the way for the people's participation in the revolution. This had nothing to do with voluntarism and sectarianism because, as he stressed, in the last analysis, the popular masses were the agents of change.

Based on his experience in Cuba, where the revolutionary forces always kept the main enemy (the Batista dictatorship) in sight, he noted that the success of the struggle depended on correct organization, headed by the revolutionary vanguard. He also identified the primary and secondary contradictions existing in the national and international arenas and what needed to be done to lead the process to its final goal: the seizure of power and the transition to socialism.

To guide this process a political-military organization was required, working in a coordinated way with all other revolutionary forces. This strategy was somewhat in contrast to that of the Latin American communist parties, which had tended to separate themselves from the specific realities of Latin America and to focus on promoting a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Che himself would suffer from the sectarian attitude of the general secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party.

Unquestionably, his "Message to the Tricontinental,"[10] which summed up his international revolutionary strategy (published when he was already immersed in the struggle in Bolivia), was the most important expression of his Third World thesis. He argued that because imperialism was a world system, the only way revolutionary forces could succeed would be by

fighting it on a global scale, eliminating its bases of support and achieving full popular participation.

To Latin America, that forgotten part of the world, he assigned the important task of creating a second or third Vietnam as the only way to solve its problems. He believed it would be a long struggle, the strategic end of which would be the destruction of imperialism.

In that process, in addition to recognizing the prevailing realities in Latin America, it was absolutely necessary to eliminate the division of the world into two large spheres of influence, capitalist and socialist. With courage and acuity, he argued that the socialist countries had a role to play in this strategy and should be ready to make sacrifices in order to contribute to the development of the dependent countries. He warned that they could not remain neutral—either in economic or armed conflicts—because, whatever the outcome, defeat or victory would belong to all. This warning clearly implied that the existing socialist countries had to engage fully with the Third World if they were truly pledged to the world revolutionary struggle.

Che's views on this were clearly presented in his speech at the Afro-Asian summit held in Algiers in February 1965: "There are no boundaries in this struggle to the death, nor can we remain indifferent to what is going on in any part of the world. The victory of any country over any other nation is a defeat for all. The exercise of proletarian internationalism is not only the duty of the peoples who are fighting to obtain a better future, it is also a need that cannot be ignored. If the United States or any other imperialist enemy acts as an aggressor against the underdeveloped peoples and the socialist countries, a basic logic determines the need for an alliance between the underdeveloped peoples and the socialist countries. Even if there weren't any other unifying factors, their common enemy would constitute one."[11]

From Che's point of view, this was the starting point of the alliance between the underdeveloped peoples, who were fighting to free themselves from imperialism, and the socialist countries, which were aware that the United States would intervene in any revolutionary process that might emerge—as was, in fact, happening frequently in those years.

With the upsurge in revolutionary movements in Latin America, authoritarian systems were put in place with the full backing of the United States, and societies were militarized or turned into de facto military regimes. This political-military policy was justified by the Cold War "national security" doctrine, directed against the spread of communism in Latin America and elsewhere. The US covert action program against President Árbenz in Guatemala became a model for intervention in other countries. In 1959, the US response to the Cuban revolution was to intensify that strategy and adopt an even more aggressive stance.

As a young man, Che had discovered in Latin America an ideal laboratory for his personal and ideological growth—from his observations of the 1952 Bolivian revolutionary movement, Árbenz's Guatemala and Fidel's Cuba, to his final efforts in Bolivia in 1967. His theory about armed struggle represented a break with the prevailing strategy of the Latin American left at the time, dominated by the communist parties that essentially saw a peaceful transition to socialism—something that Che did not exclude, but only where a strong popular movement existed.

Che threw himself into the task of creating and developing a guerrilla nucleus in Bolivia that could control an important part of the territory and become a training ground for guerrilla struggles in other Latin American countries. He felt that his presence—participating in the fighting and proposing guerrilla warfare as a specific political alternative to the status quo—would help to give a Latin American projection to the struggle.

There were significant early victories in Bolivia, in spite of the many detractors—some of whom were based in socialist countries—who denounced the Bolivian campaign and openly condemned Che's guerrilla warfare strategy.

In his famous diary written in Bolivia, Che describes how he saw the struggle as not just "a rebellion against the oligarchies [but also] against revolutionary dogma," both of which he thought were key factors hindering any real approach to revolution and which had to be opposed, no matter what some theoretical purists might argue.

Much has and could be said about the heroic actions of Che and his compañeros in Bolivia, but as a young man he summed up the essentially humanistic and ethical dimension of his thinking when he wrote: "Really, I think I have managed to understand it [Latin America], and I feel myself a

Latin American with a character different from that of any other people on the face of the earth."[12]

Winning the future

Che viewed Latin America's future—once it had swept away everything holding back its definitive liberation—as "a revolutionary anthem resounding in history and destined to become eternal on the lips of Latin America's combatants." His motivation was his astute analysis of the economic, political and social situation that had prevailed for centuries in Latin America.

He knew US imperialism would resort to brute force to prevent any revolutionary movement from developing, but he also pointed out that the historical moment was propitious and that, if the moment was not seized, the political cost would be enormous.

After more than a decade of neoliberalism, many people throughout the world today are seeking a new world order, one that is more rational and just. For Latin America, this is a pressing issue. The path is extremely difficult and dangerous, but it is not impossible if our struggles are focused on what unites us.

Even though today's world is not the same as Che's, and solutions might take different forms, Che's legacy endures as a living historical memory, reminding us that our accumulated history of rebellion, with its many political expressions, is the only way if we are truly determined to achieve a more just and sovereign Latin America.

María del Carmen Ariet García
Research Coordinator
Che Guevara Studies Center
Havana, Cuba

---

1. Ernesto Che Guevara, *The Motorcycle Diaries. Notes on a Latin America Journey* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press), 2003.
2. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Latin America Diaries* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press), 2011.
3. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Latin America Diaries,* p. 126.
4. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Latin America Diaries,* p. 84.

5. Interview with Jorge Ricardo Masetti in Ernesto Che Guevara, *Self-Portrait: A Photographic and Literary Memoir* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press), 2004.
6. Ernesto Che Guevara, “América desde el balcón afroasiático” [Latin America from the Afro-Asian Perspective] is included in this anthology.
7. Interview with Radio Rivadivia, November 3, 1959, in Ernesto Che Guevara, *Self-Portrait,* p. 172.
8. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press) 2003, pp. 294-304.
9. See Che Guevara’s speech to the UN Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, March 1964, in *Che Guevara Reader,* pp. 305-24.
10. *Che Guevara Reader,* pp. 350-62.
11. Che Guevara’s speech at the Afro-Asian summit is in *Che Guevara Reader,* pp. 340-49.
12. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Self-Portrait,* p. 97.

PART ONE

DISCOVERING LATIN AMERICA 1950–56

Introduction

This early period in Ernesto Che Guevara's life is the key to understanding his later life. It begins in 1950 when, while still at medical school, he set out on a trip around Argentina and ends with his arrival in Cuba in 1956 on board a cabin cruiser with Fidel Castro and other Cubans with the goal of initiating a guerrilla movement against the Batista dictatorship.

This was a formative stage, filled with many questions and concerns from the moment Ernesto embarked on his tour of his native Argentina on a motorized bicycle until he finds his true path and throws in his lot in with the Cuban revolutionaries.

His first trip around Latin America,[1] which began in late 1951 and lasted until mid-1952, bound him forever to the cause to which he would dedicate his life: Latin America's full independence. This trip inspired a second trip. After receiving his medical degree, in 1953 he set out once more to gain a deeper knowledge of Latin America and a greater commitment to its people.[2]

He went in search of a true revolution in Bolivia and Guatemala. Finally, in Mexico in 1955 he met Fidel Castro and other Cuban revolutionaries, an encounter that would determine the rest of his life.

It was during this period that Che the revolutionary began to emerge, the young man who later developed into the socialist theoretician and rebel leader, the seeds of which had always existed within him. It was a stage of spiritual and political growth, which brought him closer to his future as the symbol of hope for Latin America.

1. The journal of Ernesto's first trip through Latin America was posthumously published as *The Motorcycle Diaries*, and was the basis of the popular movie of the same name.
2. Ernesto's experiences during this second trip are recorded in his book, *Latin America Diaries.*

Travels in Argentina (1950)

While still a medical student in 1950, Ernesto traveled more than 3,744 kilometers (2,340 miles) through 12 northern provinces of Argentina on a motorized bicycle, the first of several journeys he would undertake. The excerpts here are from his diary of that trip, included in the book *Mi hijo el Che* [My Son Che] by Ernesto Guevara's father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch. In spite of the brevity of this selection, it displays elements that were evident throughout Che's life: his urgent need to describe his experiences and feelings, in his own language and style, and his ability to immerse himself in his surroundings, questioning everything he encountered and sharpening his awareness of the social injustice around him.

Excerpts from the "Bicycle Diaries"

The only provinces that would remain untouched would be Salta, Jujuy del Norte and the two on the coast.

When I left Buenos Aires on the night of January 1, 1950, I was full of doubts about the potential of my bike's motor and my only hope was of reaching Pilar quickly and in one piece (the end of my journey according to some well-intentioned tongues at home), and then going on to Pergamino, another of the final destinations they set for me.

As I left San Isidro and rode along the track, I shut down the little motor and pedaled onwards, so that another rider, traveling to Rosario by leg-power (on his bicycle), caught up with me. We continued together, me pedaling to keep the same speed as my companion. As I passed through Pilar, I felt the first joys of victory.

At 8:00 the following morning, we reached the first stage in my companion's journey, San Antonio de Areco, where we breakfasted together and said our goodbyes. I continued along my way and reached Pergamino by nightfall. At this second, symbolic stage I was so triumphant and emboldened by success that I forgot my fatigue and set off toward Rosario, hanging honorably on to a fuel truck, reaching Rosario by 11:00 that night.

My body was screaming for a mattress, but my will won out and I continued. At around 2:00 in the morning there was a cloudburst that lasted about an hour. I took out my raincoat and the sailcloth cape that had found its way into my pack through my mother's foresight, laughed at the downpour and shouted a verse by Sábato at the top of my lungs. [...]

At 6:00 in the morning I arrived in Leones, changed the spark plugs and filled the tank. The road now reached a monotonous stretch. At about 10:00 in the morning I went through Belle Ville and attached myself to the back of another truck that towed me close to Villa María, where I stopped a moment to do some calculations, according to which I had taken less than 40 hours to get there. I had 144 kilometers[1] to go, at 25 kilometers per hour, so there was nothing more to say. After another 10 kilometers along the track, a private car caught up with me—I was pedaling at that time to avoid overheating the motor in the midday sun—and stopped to see if I needed fuel. I said I didn't but asked if he could tow me along at 60 kilometers per hour. I had done 10 kilometers when the back tire burst and, caught off guard, my entire humanity bit the dust (with a wonderful view of the ground with my face in the road).

Investigating the cause of the disaster, I found that the motor, running unnecessarily, had eaten through the tire, exposing the inner tube and causing my fall.

With no spares and extremely tired, I flung myself down by the road to rest. After an hour or two, an empty truck came along and the driver agreed to take me to Córdoba. I packed my things into the car and reached the Granados,[2] the goal of my labors, in a total of 41 hours, 17 minutes….

In the [illegible] I have already written about, I met up with a tramp who was napping under a little bridge and who awoke with the commotion. We started to talk, and when he learned that I was a student he took a liking to me. He brought out a dirty thermos and made me *mate* with enough sugar to sweeten up an old maid. After a long chat, describing our various adventures to each other—embellishing to be sure, but perhaps revealing some truth—he recalled his days as a barber. Noticing my rather long locks, he took out some rusty scissors and a dirty comb and set to work. Halfway through, I felt something strange happening to my head and began to fear for my physical safety, but I never imagined that a pair of scissors could be

such a dangerous weapon. When he offered a small mirror that he took from his pocket, I nearly fell over—he had cut so many different bits that not a patch on my head was left untouched.

I carried my shorn head like a kind of trophy to the Aguilar home, where I went to visit my sister Ana María. To my surprise they attached scant importance to the shearing, but were amazed I had drunk the *mate* he had given me. There's no accounting for some people!

After a few days' rest waiting for Tomasito [Granado], we left for Tanti. The place we were headed to was nothing out of the ordinary, but was near facilities including fresh spring water.

After two days, we headed off on our planned journey to Los Chorrillos, some 10 kilometers away. [...]

In the Córdoba ranges the vista of the Los Chorrillos waterfall from a height of some 50 meters is something really worth seeing. As the water falls, it separates into multiple small streams that ricochet off every stone until they scatter and fall into a lower basin and then, in a profusion of lesser falls, into a large natural basin. It is the biggest waterfall I have seen in streams of this size, but unfortunately it gets very little sunlight, so the water is extremely cold and one can only stay in a few minutes.

The abundance of water from all the surrounding slopes, emerging from natural springs, makes this area extremely fertile, and there is an explosion of ferns and other damp-loving plants, lending a spectacular beauty to this place.

It was here, above the waterfall, I first tried rock climbing. I had got it into my head to descend where the waterfall trickled down gently, but for more of a thrill I chose a hazardous short cut, the most difficult I could find.

Halfway down, a stone came loose and I fell some 10 meters amid an avalanche of stones and loose rocks.

When I finally managed to find my footing, after breaking several [illegible], I had to start climbing up again because it was impossible to descend further. Here I learned the first law of rock climbing: going up is easier than going down. The bitter defeat stayed with me all day, but the next day I dived from four meters, and also from two meters (more or less), into 70 centimeters of water, wiping out the bitter taste of failure from the previous day. [...]

That day and part of the next it rained a lot… and so we decided to pack up the tent. At around 5:30, as we were leisurely gathering our bits and pieces together, we heard the first throaty roar of the torrent. People spilled out of the neighboring houses, yelling, “The water’s coming down, the water’s coming down!” Our whole camp was a circus, the three of us running back and forth with our things. At the last minute, Grego Granado picked up one of the corners of a blanket, collecting what was left, while Tomás and I pulled out the tent pegs at full speed. The wave was bearing down on us and the people nearby were shouting, “Leave it, you crazies!” plus a few other fairly unCatholic words. But at that point, only one rope was left. I had the machete in my hand and couldn’t control myself. While everyone watched with baited breath, I shouted, “Charge, brave men!” and, with a theatrical blow, I cut the tether. We were still getting everything to one side when the torrent came down with a furious roar, revealing itself in all its incredible height—one-and-a-half meters—amid interminable deafening noise. […]

I left [Tanti] at 4:00 in the afternoon on January 29 and, after a short stop in Colonia Caroya, headed for San José de la Dormida,[3] where I paid homage to the name of the place by lying down by the side of the road; I had a magnificent night’s sleep until 6:00 the following morning.

I pedaled about five kilometers further until I found a little house where they sold me a liter of fuel.

On the final stretch to San Francisco del Chañar, I started out in second. The little motor decided to take fright on a steep climb and left me to pedal about five kilometers uphill, until finally I found myself in the middle of the village. The van from the leprosy sanatorium gave me a lift from there.

The next day, we visited one of Alberto Granado’s[4] [illegible] with a Dr. Rossetti. On the way back I fell off the bike, snapping eight spokes, leaving me stranded four days longer than planned until they fixed it. [...]

We’d planned to leave on the Saturday… with Alberto Granado,[4] after a party or at least a drink at Mr. X’s place, this man being the senator for the region, the local head honcho, a modern lord of the knife and noose. […]

We spent the whole morning debating how to get away quickly. Finally, early in the afternoon, we decided to leave, me on the bike and [Alberto] and a friend on the motorbike. But first we decided to have a taste of their

vermouth, which was something special [illegible]. There was no ice, so the little fellow [Alberto] went off to get some but couldn't find any. So he went to ask for a bag of ice at the senator's home, saying I was ill, and on his return we tackled the vermouth with unusual zeal. As bad luck would have it, the senator's wife suddenly remembered that she needed some medicine and came to find Alberto [a pharmacist]. By the time we noticed her august presence it was already too late but, nevertheless, I flung myself down on the mattress, holding my head desperately as if in pain, only doing so to show off my gift as an actor because I already knew that it was in vain. […]

We left for Ojo de Agua at 4:00 p.m., when the sun was already low—Alberto had reduced our itinerary to a modest 55 kilometers. But the trip, full of mishaps, took four hours, mainly due to a series of flat tires.

In Ojo de Agua I was advised to see the director of a small hospital, where I met the administrator, a Mr. Mazza, the brother of the Córdoba senator at whose table I had eaten. Even though they had no idea who I was, the members of his family were very cordial toward me, warmly welcoming me and enthusiastic about the idea of my trip.

After a good dinner and around eight hours of sleep, I set out for the famous Salinas Grandes, the Argentine Sahara. All my officious informants said it would be impossible for me to cross the Salinas with just the pint of water I was taking, but the well-mixed blend of Irish and Galician blood that ran through my veins made me stubbornly restrict myself to that amount.

This part of the Santiago landscape reminds me of some areas to the north of Córdoba, from which it is separated only by an imaginary line. Along the sides of the roads there are enormous cacti, some six meters tall, like giant green candelabras. The vegetation is abundant and there are signs of fertility, but the scene slowly changes, the road becomes rough and dusty, the *quebracho* trees disappear and the *jarilla* seems to take over.

The sun beats down on my head, enveloping me in waves of heat reflected up from the ground. I choose the leafy shade of a carob tree and lie down to sleep for an hour, get up, and after a couple of *mates* get on with the journey. Along the track, the milestone on Route 9 marking kilometer 1,000 welcomes me.

One kilometer later, the *jarilla* takes over completely and I am now in the Sahara but, suddenly and to my great surprise, the track (privileged to be one of the worst so far), turns into a magnificently sealed, firm, flat road where the bike's motor was in its element, ticking over happily.

This was not the only surprise that awaited me in the heartland of the republic—I noticed there is a ranch every four or five kilometers, which made me wonder whether I really was in such a desolate place after all. But the ocean of silver-stained earth and its green mane allows no room for doubt. From time to time, like an awkward sentinel, the vigilant figure of a cactus appears.

In two-and-a-half hours I covered 80 kilometers of salt pan, and then I got another surprise: when I asked for some cold water to replace what had been warming up in my water bottle I learned that there was plenty of drinking water only three meters below the ground. Evidently, reputation is subordinate to subjective impression, unless there is some other explanation for the following phenomena: good roads, a lot of ranches, water at three meters. Not bad.

Well after dark I reached Loreto, a town of several thousand souls, but nevertheless quite backward.

The police officer I met when I went to ask about somewhere to spend the night told me there was not a single doctor in the town and, when he learned that I was doing fifth-year medicine, gave me the sound advice that I should set myself up there as the town healer. "Doctors can earn a lot of money and do us a favor, too."[…]

I set off early, traveling along some terrible stretches of road and some very good surfaces. I parted ways forever with my water bottle, claimed by a treacherous pothole, and eventually reached Santiago where I was given a warm reception by a friend's family.

It was here that the first report about me[5] was done for a Tucumán newspaper, written by a Mr. Santillan, who met me on my first stop in the town. […]

That day I discovered the city of Santiago… where the infernal heat is too much even for its inhabitants, who remain locked in their homes until the evening, when they come out into the streets to get on with their social life.

The village of La Banda, on the other side of the Dulce River, was prettier. The river runs through a gully over half a mile wide, but it is dry for most of the year. There is a marked antagonism between the two towns, which I observed during a basketball game between teams from the two neighboring areas. […]

At 9:00 the next morning I continue on my way to Tucumán, where I arrived late that night.

At one point along the way something curious happened when I had stopped to inflate a tire, about a kilometer out from a town. A tramp appeared, sheltering under a small bridge, and naturally we began to talk. This man had been picking cotton in Chaco and, after wandering about for a while, he was thinking of heading for the grape harvest in San Juan. When he learned of my plan to travel through several provinces, and discovered that my exploits were nothing more than a joyride, he clasped his head in despair: "*Mamma mía*, you're putting all this effort into nothing?"[…]

I set off again toward the capital of Tucumán province. Like a flash, I flitted through the majestic town of Tucumán at 30 kilometers an hour and immediately took the road to Salta, but was caught in a downpour of rain. I humbly ended up in the armory of a barracks, from where I left for Salta at 6:00 in the morning.

The road out of Tucumán is one of the most beautiful sights in the north [of Argentina]. Along some 20 kilometers of good road there is lush vegetation on both sides, a kind of tropical forest within the tourist's reach, with a million little streams and a humid atmosphere that makes the place seem like a film set of the Amazon jungle. Entering these natural gardens, walking among the lianas, stepping through the ferns, observing how everything here makes fun of our scant botanical culture, one expects every moment to hear a lion roar, to see a snake glide silently by or the agile movement of a deer. Suddenly there was a roar, not very loud but constant. It turned out to be the chugging of a truck laboring up the hill.

This clamor smashed the glass castle of my reverie, bringing me back to reality. I realized at that moment that something which had been growing in me for some time, in the hustle and bustle of the city, had now matured: a real hatred of civilization. The crude sight of people rushing about like mad things, to the beat of a tremendous noise, now seemed to me the loathsome

antithesis of peace, of this [illegible] which created such harmonious background music in the quiet rustling of the leaves.

I returned to the road and continued on my way. At 11:00 or 12:00 I came to a roadside police checkpoint where I stopped to rest. Along came a motorcyclist on a brand new Harley Davidson and offered me a tow. I asked him how fast he'd go. "If I go slow, about 80 or 90." Naturally I had learned from experience, at the cost of my ribs, that I can't go over 40 kilometers an hour while being towed, given the instability of my load and the uneven roads.

I declined, and after thanking [*crossed out*] who had offered me a mug of coffee, I kept going, hoping to reach Salta in daylight. I had 200 kilometers still to go, so I needed to get a move on.

At Rosario de la Frontera, I had an unhappy encounter at the police station. They were lifting the same Harley Davidson off the back of a truck. I went over to inquire about the rider. "Dead," they told me.

Naturally, the minor personal tragedy of the obscure death of this motorcyclist has no impact on the sensibilities of the masses, but the knowledge that a man seeks danger, without even the vague heroism associated with public exploits, and dies taking a bend in the road, with no witnesses, made this unknown adventurer seem to have some kind of vague "death wish." This is something that might make the study of such a personality interesting, but it is completely beyond the scope of these notes.

From Rosario de la Frontera to Metán the sealed and smooth road offered me an easy ride, preparing me for the stretch from Metán to Salta, which required a great deal of patience to spot the "serrations."

Nevertheless, the bad roads of this area are compensated for by the magnificent landscape. We came to a mountainous zone where, around each bend, there was something new to marvel at. Approaching Lobería, I am lucky to see one of the most beautiful sights of my travels so far. Beside the road there was a kind of suspended railway bridge with the Juramento River running beneath. The banks are formed with stones of many colors and the river's gray waters chart their turbulent course through sheer cliffs covered in magnificent vegetation.

I stay for a while gazing at the water…. The gray foam, leaping like sparks as the water crashes against the rocks and returns to the whirlpool,

invites me to plunge in, to be rocked brutally in the water and shout incoherently like a condemned man.

I climb the hill feeling slightly melancholy; the roaring waters I was leaving behind seem to reproach me for my romantic shortcomings, and I feel like a confirmed bachelor. Above me and my philosophical Jack London style beard, the biggest nanny goat in the herd chuckles at my clumsiness as a climber. Once again the loud clamor of a truck drags me out of my hermit's meditation.

It is already dark when I climb the last hill and find before me the magnificent town of Salta. Its only notable defect is the fact that the visitor is welcomed by the geometric rigidity of the cemetery.

With my developing lack of shame, I present myself at the hospital as an "exhausted, adventurous, almost broke medical student." They offer me a vehicle with soft seats as lodgings, making a bed fit for a king. I sleep like a log until 7:00 in the morning, when they wake me so they can use the car. The rain is torrential, so my journey is delayed. At about 2:00 in the afternoon I start out for Jujuy, but the road out of the city is boggy from the heavy downpour and it is impossible for me to go on. Nevertheless, I find a truck and it turns out that the driver is an old acquaintance. A few kilometers on, we go our separate ways, he to Campo Santo to collect cement, while I head off on a road known as La Cornisa.

The water that has fallen runs together in little streams that descend from the surrounding hills and cross the road to join the Mojotoro River, which runs alongside the road. This is not the impressive spectacle of Salta and the Juramento, but its cheerful beauty acts as a tonic for the spirit. After leaving the river behind, the traveler moves into the true regions of La Cornisa—its majestic beauty found in its hills adorned with green forest. There is one mountain pass after another, framed by the adjacent greenery. Through the branches, the distant green plain can be seen as if through a tinted lens.

The wet foliage imbues the atmosphere with its freshness, and instead of the penetrating, aggressive humidity of Tucumán, there is something fresh and mild here. The charm of this warm, damp afternoon, refreshed by the dense forest… transported me to a dream world, a world very different from my present situation. But I knew the way back from it well and was not cut off by the fog-filled abysses of the realms of fantasy. [...]

Weary of so much beauty, like suffering indigestion from an excess of chocolate, I reach the town of Jujuy, with aches and pains inside and out, wanting to discover the measure of the province's hospitality. What better occasion than now to research the hospitals of the country?

I sleep wonderfully in one of the wards, after being obliged to demonstrate my medical knowledge. Equipped with some tweezers and a bit of ether, I set about the thrilling hunt for [illegible] in a little kid's shaven head.

His monotonous whining lacerates my ears like a fine stiletto, while my scientific alter ego counts with indolent rapacity the number of my [dead] enemies. I can't understand how this little dark-skinned kid, barely two years old, could come to be so full of larvae. Even if you tried, it would not be easy to do. [...]

I get into bed and try to make of this insignificant episode a solid foundation for my pariah's sleep. [...]

The magnificent new day shines brighter for me and invites me to set off again. The gentle purring of my bike is lost in the solitude, and I begin my return by the lowland road that takes me to Campo Santo. There is nothing worthy of note on that section of road, the only highlight being the scenery of Gallinato. Even better is the view from La Cornisa, because you can see farther, giving a sense of grandeur that the other lacks to some extent.

I arrive in Salta at 2:00 in the afternoon, and go to visit some friends at the hospital. They are amazed to find I had done the whole trip in only one day, and so one of them enquires, "But what did you see?" The question remains unanswered because it was formulated in such a way for there to be no answer.

And that's the whole point, the real question being what *do* I see. I don't nourish myself on the same sights as other tourists, and I find it strange to see how tourist maps, such as the map of Jujuy, highlight the Altar de la Patria, the cathedral where the national flag was blessed, the jewel of the pulpit and miraculous little virgin of Río Blanco and Pompeya, the house where General Lavalle was killed, the city council of the revolution, the provincial museum, etc.

No, one does not get to know a people that way, their way of life and so on. Buildings are just a glossy cover. The spirit of a people is reflected in

the patients in the hospitals, the inmates at the police station and the anxious man in the street one chats to while the Río Grande displays its turbulent, swollen waters below. But all this takes a long time to explain, and who knows if I would be understood. I thank them and leave on a visit to the town I failed to see properly the first time around.

At dusk, I approach a police station on the outskirts of the city and ask permission to spend the night there. I planned to do the mountainous part on a truck, to save myself from the hard pedaling on bad roads and from having to wade across a river and several swollen streams. But I am quickly discouraged. As it is Saturday, it is very unlikely that a truck would pass by, since all of them go by early in order to reach Tucumán on Sunday morning. Resigned, I start chatting with the policemen, and they show me the famous female *Anopheles* [mosquito]—an elongated, stylized, slender creature that hardly looks as if it could be responsible for the terrible scourge of malaria.

The full moon displays its subtropical exuberance, throwing floods of silvery light that produce a very pleasant chiaroscuro. This inspires one of the policemen to talk at great length on philosophical matters, and he winds up with the following story:

“The other day, a man heard the galloping of a herd of horses and the barking of dogs. He went out with a lantern and his revolver and stationed himself in a strategic position. The horses went by again to the sound of the dogs’ barking, and after this ruckus, as if by way of an explanation, a black mule with enormous ears appeared, circumspectly following the herd. The chorus of barks got louder, and once again the herd of horses galloped past. The mule headed in a different direction and when the moon could be seen between its ears, the man felt a chill run down his spine.”

The old policeman interrupted his companion with this wise comment: “There must be a tortured soul in that mule.” He suggested that the animal be killed to liberate it. “What else?” he asked. “Nothing; on the contrary, he’ll thank you. What more does he want?” Dispensing with any humanitarian considerations, I, who had been brought up on stories of justice, propriety, annoying noises, etc., ventured the timid objection that the mule’s owner and neighbors wouldn’t be very happy about it all.

They looked at me in a way that shamed me. How could that mule have an owner, and, even if it had one, who wouldn’t be happy to free a tortured

soul? They didn’t even deign to demolish my argument.

The three of us remained staring pensively at the moon, which magnificently spread silvery shadows over the hills. The cool Salta night was filled with the music of frogs, and I fell into a short sleep, lulled by their songs.

At 4:00 a.m. I bade farewell to the policemen and began my arduous trek toward Tucumán. The bike’s brakes were giving me trouble so I had to be careful on the slopes. I didn’t know what I might find around a bend, since my headlight wasn’t strong enough to show me what was ahead.

At around 7:00 in the morning, I had a pleasant surprise: a long line of trucks was bogged in the mud, one after the other. The drivers had just woken up and were discussing the situation. I went up to them to investigate and, to my surprise, found that my old friend Luchini was one of them.

There was a heated exchange and the truck drivers immediately bet me that I couldn’t reach the sealed road that led to Tucumán before they did. I was to set out right away, and, if they got there first, too bad; but if they couldn’t catch up with me, I was to wait there, and they would treat me to a fabulous meal with all the trimmings. I then forgot all about the scenery, my faulty brakes, the zigzags, the dangerous curves, exhaustion and thirst and concentrated only on the splendor of the banquet awaiting me. Every step that drew me closer to my goal made more vivid my vision of a sumptuous, juicy chicken surrounded by delicious baked potatoes…

---

1. One kilometer is equal to 0.62 miles.
2. Ernesto had been friends with the Granado brothers (Tomás, Gregorio and Alberto) since they were children in Córdoba, Argentina.
3. *Dormida* means sleep in Spanish.
4. Alberto Granado would be Ernesto’s companion on his first big trip around Latin America on the motorcycle.
5. An article about Ernesto’s trip around Argentina was published in the daily *Trópico* on February 3, 1950: “Guevara, un joven raidista, cumplirá una extensa gira.”

First Trip through Latin America (1951–52)

Notas de viaje (or “travel notes”) was the title given to this book by the Che Guevara Studies Center (Havana) when it was first decided to publish Che’s youthful diary. It contains 42 chronicles that young Ernesto wrote a year after making his first journey through Latin America, visiting Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela between late 1951 and mid-1952. He based these accounts on his travel diary and notes, a method of writing he would utilize throughout his life.

This selection has been chosen not only for their literary value but also because they show the significance the trip had for the young Ernesto.

Excerpts from *The Motorcycle Diaries*

So We Understand Each Other

This is not a story of heroic feats, or merely the narrative of a cynic; at least I do not mean it to be. It is a glimpse of two lives running parallel for a time, with similar hopes and convergent dreams.

In nine months of a man’s life he can think a lot of things, from the loftiest meditations on philosophy to the most desperate longing for a bowl of soup—in total accord with the state of his stomach. And if, at the same time, he’s somewhat of an adventurer, he might live through episodes of interest to other people and his haphazard record might read something like these notes.

And so, the coin was thrown in the air, turning many times, landing sometimes heads and other times tails. Man, the measure of all things, speaks here through my mouth and narrates in my own language that which my eyes have seen. It is likely that out of 10 possible heads I have seen only one true tail, or vice versa. In fact it’s probable, and there are no excuses, for these lips can only describe what these eyes actually see. Is it that our whole vision was never quite complete, that it was too transient or not

always well-informed? Were we too uncompromising in our judgments? Okay, but this is how the typewriter interpreted those fleeting impulses raising my fingers to the keys, and those impulses have now died. Moreover, no one can be held responsible for them.

The person who wrote these notes passed away the moment his feet touched Argentine soil again. The person who reorganizes and polishes them, me, is no longer, at least I am not the person I once was. All this wandering around "Our America with a capital A" has changed me more than I thought.

In any photographic manual you'll come across the strikingly clear image of a landscape, apparently taken by night, in the light of a full moon. The secret behind this magical vision of "darkness at noon" is usually revealed in the accompanying text. Readers of this book will not be well versed about the sensitivity of my retina—I can hardly sense it myself. So they will not be able to check what is said against a photographic plate to discover at precisely what time each of my "pictures" was taken. What this means is that if I present you with an image and say, for instance, that it was taken at night, you can either believe me, or not; it matters little to me, since if you don't happen to know the scene I've "photographed" in my notes, it will be hard for you to find an alternative to the truth I'm about to tell. But I'll leave you now, with myself, the man I used to be…

La Gioconda's Smile

We had come to a new phase in our adventure. We were used to calling idle attention to ourselves with our strange dress and the prosaic figure of *La Poderosa* II,[1] whose asthmatic wheezing aroused pity in our hosts. To a certain extent we had been knights of the road; we belonged to that longstanding "wandering aristocracy" and had calling cards with our impeccable and impressive titles. No longer. Now we were just two hitchhikers with backpacks, and with all the grime of the road stuck to our overalls, shadows of our former aristocratic selves.

The truck driver had left us at the upper edge of the city, at its entrance, and with weary steps we dragged our packs down the streets, followed by the amused or indifferent glances of onlookers. In the distance the harbor radiated with the tempting glimmer of its boats, while the sea, black and

inviting, cried out to us—its gray smell dilating our nostrils. We bought bread—which seemed so expensive at the time though it became cheaper as we ventured further north—and kept walking downhill. Alberto wore his exhaustion obviously, and although I tried not to show it I was just as tired. So when we found a truck stop we assaulted the attendant with our tragic faces, relating in florid detail the hardships we had suffered on the long hard road from Santiago. He let us sleep on some wooden planks, in the company of some parasites whose name ends in *hominis,* but at least we had a roof over our heads.

We set about sleeping with determination. News of our arrival, however, reached the ears of a fellow-countryman installed in a cheap restaurant next to the trailer park, and he wanted to meet us. To meet in Chile signifies a certain hospitality and neither of us was in a position to turn down this manna from heaven. Our compatriot proved to be profoundly imbued with the spirit of the sisterland and consequently was fantastically drunk. It was a long time since I had eaten fish, and the wine was so delicious, and our host so attentive… Anyway, we ate well and he invited us to his house the following day.

La Gioconda threw open its doors early and we brewed our *mate*, chatting with the owner who was very interested in our journey. After that, we went to explore the city. Valparaíso is very picturesque, built to the edge of the beach and overlooking a large bay. As it grew it clambered up the hills that sweep down to their deaths in the sea. The madhouse museum beauty of its strange corrugated iron architecture, arranged on a series of tiers linked by winding flights of stairs and funiculars, is heightened by the contrast of diversely colored houses blending with the leaden blue of the bay. As if patiently dissecting, we pry into dirty stairways and dark recesses, talking to the swarms of beggars; we plumb the city's depths, the miasma that draws us in. Our distended nostrils inhale the poverty with sadistic intensity…

We visited the ships down at the docks to see if any were going to Easter Island but the news was disheartening: it would be six months before any boat was going there. We collected some vague details about flights that left once a month.

Easter Island! The imagination stops in its ascending flight to turn somersaults at the very thought: "Over there, having a white 'boyfriend' is

an honor”; “Work? Ha! the women do everything—you just eat, sleep and keep them content.” This marvellous place where the weather is perfect, the women are perfect, the food perfect, the work perfect (in its beatific nonexistence). What does it matter if we stay there a year; who cares about studying, work, family, etc. In a shop window a giant crayfish winks at us, and from his bed of lettuce his whole body tells us, “I’m from Easter Island, where the weather is perfect, the women are perfect...”

In the doorway of La Gioconda we were waiting patiently for our compatriot to show up, who gave no sign of appearing, when the owner invited us in out of the sun and treated us to one of his magnificent lunches of fried fish and watery soup. We never heard from the Argentine again throughout our stay in Valparaíso, but we became great friends with the owner of the bar. He was a strange sort of guy, indolent and enormously generous to all the riff raff who turned up, though he made normal customers pay colossal prices for the paltry cuisine he sold in his place. We didn’t pay a cent the whole time we were there and he lavished hospitality on us. “Today it’s your turn, tomorrow it’ll be mine” was his favorite saying; not very original but very effective.

We tried to contact the doctors from Petrohué, but being back at work with no time to spare, they never agreed to meet us formally. At least we knew more or less where they were. In the afternoon we went our separate ways: while Alberto followed up the doctors, I went to see an old woman with asthma, a customer at La Gioconda. The poor thing was in a pitiful state, breathing the acrid smell of concentrated sweat and dirty feet that filled her room, mixed with the dust from a couple of armchairs, the only luxury items in her house. On top of her asthma, she had a heart condition. It is at times like this, when a doctor is conscious of his complete powerlessness, that he longs for change: a change to prevent the injustice of a system in which only a month ago this poor woman was still earning her living as a waitress, wheezing and panting but facing life with dignity. In circumstances like this, individuals in poor families who can’t pay their way become surrounded by an atmosphere of barely disguised acrimony; they stop being father, mother, sister or brother and become a purely negative factor in the struggle for life and, consequently, a source of bitterness for the healthy members of the community who resent their illness as if it were a personal insult to those who have to support them. It is there, in the final

moments, for people whose farthest horizon has always been tomorrow, that one comprehends the profound tragedy circumscribing the life of the proletariat the world over. In those dying eyes there is a submissive appeal for forgiveness and also, often, a desperate plea for consolation which is lost to the void, just as their body will soon be lost in the magnitude of mystery surrounding us. How long this present order, based on an absurd idea of caste, will last is not within my means to answer, but it's time that those who govern spent less time publicizing their own virtues and more money, much more money, funding socially useful works.

There isn't much I can do for the sick woman. I simply advise her to improve her diet and prescribe a diuretic and some asthma pills. I have a few Dramamine tablets left and I give them to her. When I leave, I am followed by the fawning words of the old woman and the family's indifferent gaze…

Alberto had tracked down the doctors. At nine the following morning we had to be at the hospital. Meanwhile, in La Gioconda's filthy room which serves as kitchen, restaurant, laundry, dining room and piss-house for cats and dogs, a miscellaneous collection of people were meeting: the owner, with his basic life philosophy; Doña Carolina, a deaf and helpful old dear who left our *mate* kettle as good as new; a drunk, feeble-minded Mapuche [indigenous] man who looked like a criminal; two more or less normal customers; and the queen of the gathering Doña Rosita, who was quite crazy. The conversation focused on a macabre event Rosita had witnessed; it appeared she alone had seen a man with a large knife stabbing her poor neighbor.

"Was your neighbor screaming, Doña Rosita?"

"Of course she was screaming, who wouldn't! He was skinning her alive! That's not all. Afterwards, he took her down to the sea and dragged her to the water's edge so the sea would take her away. Oh, to hear that woman scream, señor, scared the living daylight out of me, you should have seen it!"

"Why didn't you tell the police, Rosita?"

"Oh, what for? Don't you remember when your cousin was beat up? Well, I went to report it and they told me I was crazy, that if I didn't stop inventing things they'd lock me up, imagine that. No, I wouldn't tell that lot anything!"

The conversation turned to the “messenger from God,” a local man who uses the powers God has given him to cure deafness, dumbness, paralysis, etc., passing the collection plate around afterwards. The business seems no worse than any other, and though the pamphlets are extraordinary, so is people’s gullibility. But that is how it is, and they continued to make fun of the things Doña Rosita saw with all the conviction in the world.

The reception from the doctors was not over-friendly, but we gained our objective: they gave us an introduction to Molinas Luco, mayor of Valparaíso. We took our leave with all the required formality and went to the town hall. Our dazed and exhausted expressions didn’t impact favorably on the man at the desk, but he had received orders to let us in.

The secretary showed us a copy of a letter written in response to ours, explaining that our project was impossible since the only ship to Easter Island had left and that there wouldn’t be another ship leaving within the year. We were ushered into the sumptuous office of Dr. Molinas Luco, who received us amicably. He gave the impression, however, of acting out a scene in a play, taking a lot of care to pronounce each word perfectly. He became enthusiastic only when talking about Easter Island, which he had wrested from the English by proving it belonged to Chile. He recommended we keep up with events and said he would take us the following year. “I may not be in this office, but I am still president of the Friends of Easter Island Society,” he said, a tacit confession of González Videla’s impending electoral defeat. As we left, the man at the desk told us to take our dog with us, and to our amazement showed us a puppy that had done its business on the lobby carpet and was gnawing at a chair leg. The dog had probably followed us, attracted by our hobo appearance, and the doorman imagined it was just another accessory of our eccentric attire. Anyway, the poor animal, robbed of the bond linking him to us, got a good kick up the ass and was thrown out howling. Still, it was always consoling to know that some living thing’s well-being depended on our protection.

By this time we were determined that traveling by sea we could avoid the desert in northern Chile, and we fronted up to the shipping companies requesting free passage to any of the northern ports. The captain at one of them promised to take us if we could arrange permission from the maritime authorities to work for our passage. The reply, of course, was negative and we found ourselves back at square one. In that split second, Alberto made a

heroic decision, which went something like this: we would sneak on to the boat and hide away in the hold. For our best chance we would have to wait until nightfall, try to persuade the sailor on duty and see what would happen. We collected our things, evidently far too many for this particular plan. With great regret we farewelled all our friends and afterwards crossed through the main gates of the port; burning our bridges, we set off on our maritime adventure.

This Time, Disaster

I can see him now clearly, the drunken captain, like all his officers and the owner of the vessel alongside with his great big mustache, their crude gestures the results of bad wine. And the wild laughter as they recounted our odyssey. “Hey listen, they’re tigers, they’re on your boat now for sure, you’ll find out when you’re out to sea.” The captain must have let slip to his friend and colleague this or some similar phrase.

We didn’t, of course, know any of this; an hour before sailing we were comfortably installed, totally buried in tons of perfumed melons, stuffing ourselves silly. We were talking about the sailors, who were the best, since with the complicity of one of them we had been able to get on board and hide ourselves away in such a secure spot. And then we heard an irate voice, and a seemingly enormous mustache emerged from who knows where and plunged us into an appalling confusion. A long line of melon skins, perfectly peeled, was floating away Indian file on the tranquil sea. The rest was ignominious. The sailor told us afterwards, “I’d have got him off the scent, boys, but he saw the melons and it seems he went into a ‘batten down the hatches, don’t let anyone escape’ routine. And well,” (he was fairly embarrassed) “you shouldn’t have eaten so many melons!”

One of our traveling companions from the *San Antonio* summed up his brilliant life philosophy with one fine phrase: “Stop arsing about you assholes. Why don’t you get off your asses and go back to your asshole country.” So that is more or less what we did; we picked up our bags and set off for Chuquicamata, the famous copper mine.

But not straight away. There was a pause of one day while we waited for permission from the mine’s authorities to visit and meanwhile we received an appropriate send-off from the enthusiastic Bacchanalian sailors.

Lying beneath the meager shade of two lampposts on the arid road leading to the mines, we spent a good part of the day yelling things at each other now and again from one post to another, until on the horizon appeared the asthmatic outline of the little truck which took us halfway, to a town called Baquedano.

There we made friends with a married couple, Chilean workers who were communists.[2] By the light of the single candle illuminating us, drinking *mate* and eating a piece of bread and cheese, the man's shrunken figure carried a mysterious, tragic air. In his simple, expressive language he recounted his three months in prison, and told us about his starving wife who stood by him with exemplary loyalty, his children left in the care of a kindly neighbor, his fruitless pilgrimage in search of work and his compañeros, mysteriously disappeared and said to be somewhere at the bottom of the sea.

The couple, numb with cold, huddling against each other in the desert night, were a living representation of the proletariat in any part of the world. They had not one single miserable blanket to cover themselves with, so we gave them one of ours and Alberto and I wrapped the other around us as best we could. It was one of the coldest times in my life, but also one which made me feel a little more brotherly toward this strange, for me at least, human species.

At eight the next morning we found a truck to take us to the town of Chuquicamata. We separated from the couple who were heading for the sulphur mines in the mountains where the climate is so bad and the living conditions so hard that you don't need a work permit and nobody asks you what your politics are. The only thing that matters is the enthusiasm with which the workers set to ruining their health in search of a few meager crumbs that barely provide their subsistence.

Although the blurred silhouette of the couple was nearly lost in the distance separating us, we could still see the man's singularly determined face and we remembered his straightforward invitation: "Come, compañeros, let's eat together. I, too, am a tramp," showing his underlying disdain for the parasitic nature he saw in our aimless traveling.

It's a great pity that they repress people like this. Apart from whether collectivism, the "communist vermin," is a danger to decent life, the

communism gnawing at his entrails was no more than a natural longing for something better, a protest against persistent hunger transformed into a love for this strange doctrine, whose essence he could never grasp but whose translation, “bread for the poor,” was something which he understood and, more importantly, filled him with hope.

Once there, the bosses, the blond, efficient and arrogant managers, told us in primitive Spanish: “This isn’t a tourist town. I’ll find a guide to give you a half-hour tour around the mine’s installations and then do us a favor and leave us alone, we have a lot of work to do.” A strike was imminent. Yet the guide, faithful dog of the Yankee bosses, told us: “Imbecilic gringos, losing thousands of *pesos* every day in a strike so as not to give a poor worker a few more *centavos.* When my General Ibánez[3] comes to power that’ll all be over.” And a foreman-poet: “These are the famous terraces that enable every inch of copper to be mined. Many people like you ask me technical questions but it is rare they ask how many lives it has cost. I can’t answer you, doctors, but thank you for asking.”

Cold efficiency and impotent resentment go hand in hand in the big mine, linked in spite of the hatred by the common necessity to live, on the one hand, and to speculate on the other… we will see whether one day, some miner will take up his pick in pleasure and go and poison his lungs with a conscious joy. They say that is what it’s like over there, where the red blaze that now lights up the world comes from. So they say. I don’t know.

Chuquicamata

Chuquicamata is like a scene from a modern drama. You cannot say that it’s lacking in beauty, but it is a beauty without grace, imposing and glacial. As you come close to any part of the mine, the whole landscape seems to concentrate, giving a feeling of suffocation across the plain. There is a moment when, after 200 kilometers, the lightly shaded green of the little town of Calama interrupts the monotonous gray and is greeted with the joy which an authentic oasis in the desert richly deserves. And what a desert! The weather observatory at Moctezuma, near “Chuqui,” describes it as the driest in the world. The mountains, where not a single blade of grass can grow in the nitrate soil, are defenseless against attacks of wind and water.

They display their gray spine, prematurely aged in the battle with the elements, and their wrinkles that do not correspond to their real geological age. And how many of those mountains surrounding their famous brother enclose in their heavy entrails similar riches, as they wait for the soulless arms of the mechanical shovels to devour their insides, spiced as they would be with the inevitable human lives—the lives of the poor, unsung heroes of this battle, who die miserably in one of the thousand traps set by nature to defend its treasures, when all they want is to earn their daily bread.

Chuquicamata is essentially a great copper mountain with 20-meter-high terraces cut into its enormous sides, from where the extracted mineral is easily transported by rail. The unique formation of the vein means that extraction is entirely open cut, allowing large-scale exploitation of the ore body, which grades one percent copper per ton of ore. Every morning the mountain is dynamited and huge mechanical shovels load the material on to rail wagons that take it to the grinder to be crushed. This crushing occurs over three consecutive passes, turning the raw material into a medium-fine gravel. It is then put in a sulphuric acid solution which extracts the copper in the form of a sulphate, also forming a copper chloride, which becomes ferrous chloride when it comes into contact with old iron. From there the liquid is taken to the so-called “green house” where the copper sulphate solution is put into huge baths and for a week submitted to a current of 30 volts, bringing about the electrolysis of the salt: the copper sticks to the thin sheets of the same metal, which have previously been formed in other baths with stronger solutions. After five or six days, the sheets are ready for the smelter; the solution has lost eight to 10 grams of sulphate per liter and is enriched with new quantities of the ground material. The sheets are then placed in furnaces that, after 12 hours smelting at 2,000 degrees centigrade, produce 350-pound ingots. Every night 45 wagons in convoy take over 20 tons of copper each down to Antofagasta, the result of the day’s work.

This is a crude summary of the manufacturing process, which employs a floating population of 30,000 souls in Chuquicamata; but this process only extracts oxide ore. The Chile Exploration Company is building another plant to exploit the sulphate ore. This plant, the biggest of its kind in the world, has two 96-meter-high chimneys and will take over almost all future production, while the old plant will be slowly phased out since the oxide

ore is about to run out. There is already an enormous stockpile of raw material to feed the new smelter and it will begin to be processed in 1954 when the plant is opened.

Chile produces 20 percent of the world's copper, and in these uncertain times of potential conflict copper has become vitally important because it is an essential component of various types of weapons of destruction. Hence, an economic and political battle is being waged in Chile between a coalition of nationalist and left-wing groupings that advocate nationalizing the mines, and those who, in the cause of free enterprise, prefer a well-run mine (even in foreign hands) to possibly less efficient management by the state. Serious accusations have been made in Congress against the companies currently exploiting the concessions, symptomatic of the climate of nationalist aspiration surrounding copper production.

Whatever the outcome of the battle, one would do well not to forget the lesson taught by the graveyards of the mines, containing only a small share of the immense number of people devoured by cave-ins, silica and the hellish climate of the mountain.

Chile, A Vision from Afar

When I made these travel notes, hot and fresh with enthusiasm, I wrote some things that were perhaps a little flashy and somewhat removed from the intended spirit of scientific inquiry. And it's probably not appropriate now, more than a year after writing them, to give my current opinions about Chile; I'd prefer to review what I wrote then.

Beginning with our area of expertise, medicine: the panorama of health care in Chile leaves a lot to be desired (although I realized later it was by far superior to that in other countries I got to know). Free, public hospitals are extremely rare and even in those, posters announcing the following appear: "Why do you complain about your treatment if you are not contributing to the maintenance of this hospital?" Generally speaking, medical attention in the north is free, but hospital accommodation has to be paid for, and prices range from petty sums to virtual monuments to legalized theft. Sick or injured workers at the Chuquicamata mine receive medical attention and hospital treatment for five Chilean *escudos* a day, but someone not working at the mine would pay between 300 and 500 *escudos*

a day. Hospitals have no money and they lack medicine and adequate facilities. We have seen filthy operating rooms with pitiful lighting, not just in small towns but even in Valparaíso. There aren't enough surgical instruments. The bathrooms are dirty. Awareness of hygiene is poor. It's a Chilean custom (afterwards I saw it across practically all of South America) not to throw used toilet paper in the toilet but on to the floor or in the boxes provided.

The standard of living in Chile is lower than in Argentina. On top of the very low wages paid in the south, unemployment is high and the authorities afford workers very little protection (although it's better than what is provided in the north of the continent). Veritable waves of Chileans are driven by all this into emigrating to Argentina, in search of the legendary city of gold which cunning political propaganda has offered those who live to the west of the Andes. In the north, workers in the copper, nitrate, gold and sulphur mines are better paid, but life is much more expensive, and in general they lack many essential consumer items and the mountain climate is cruel. It brings to mind the meaningful shrug with which a manager at Chuquicamata answered my questions regarding compensation paid to the families of the 10,000 or more workers interred in the local cemetery.

The political scene is confusing (this was written before the elections in which Ibáñez triumphed). There are four presidential candidates, of whom Carlos Ibáñez del Campo seems most likely to win. A retired soldier with dictatorial tendencies and political ambitions similar to those of Perón, he inspires his people with all the enthusiasm of a caudillo. His base of power is the Popular Socialist Party, behind which various minor factions are united. Second in line, as far as I can see, is Pedro Enrique Alfonso, the official government candidate, who is politically ambiguous; he seems to be friendly with the Americans and courts almost all the other parties. The champion of the right is the tycoon Arturo Matte Larraín, the son-in-law of the late President Alessandri, who enjoys the support of all the reactionary sectors of the population. Last on the list is the Popular Front candidate Salvador Allende,[4] who is supported by the communists even though they have seen their voting power reduced by 40,000, the number of people denied the right to vote because of their affiliation to the Communist Party.

It’s likely that Ibáñez will observe a politics of Latin Americanism, manipulating hatred for the United States to gain popularity; nationalizing the copper mines and others (although the fact that the United States owns huge Peruvian mineral deposits and is practically ready to begin exploiting them does not greatly increase my confidence that nationalization of these Chilean mines will be feasible, at least in the short term); continue nationalizing the railroads and substantially enlarge Argentine-Chilean trade.

Chile as a nation offers economic promise to any person disposed to work for it, so long as they don’t belong to the proletariat: that is, anyone who has a certain dose of education and technical knowledge. The land has the capacity to sustain enough livestock (especially sheep) and cereals to provide for its population. There are the necessary mineral resources to transform it into a powerful industrial country: iron, copper, coal, tin, gold, silver, manganese and nitrates. The biggest effort Chile should make is to shake its uncomfortable Yankee friend from its back, a task that for the moment at least is Herculean, given the quantity of dollars the United States has invested and the ease with which it flexes its economic muscle whenever its interests appear threatened.

In the Dominions of Pachamama

By 3:00 in the morning, the blankets of the Peruvian police had demonstrated their value, swathing us in restorative warmth. The policeman on guard then shook us awake—there was a truck heading for Ilave—and we found ourselves in the sad situation of having to leave them behind. The night was magnificent, if terribly cold, and we were granted the privilege of some planks to sit on, separating us from the foul-smelling, flea-ridden human flock below us, their potent but warm stink a virtual lasso. Only as the vehicle began its ascent did we realize the magnitude of the concession: nothing of the smell came close and it would have been difficult for a single, athletic flea to spring on to us for refuge. The wind lashed liberally against our bodies, however, and within minutes we were literally frozen. The truck continued to climb and with every minute the cold became more intense. To stop ourselves falling off we had to keep our hands outside the more or less protective blankets; it was difficult to shift position even

slightly without coming close to head-first flight into the back of the truck. Close to dawn, some carburetor problem which afflicts engines at this altitude caused the truck to stop; we were nearing the highest point of the road, almost 5,000 meters. In some corners of the sky the sun was rising and a vague light replaced the total darkness accompanying us until then. The psychological effect of the sun is strange: it had not yet appeared over the horizon and we already felt comforted, just imagining the heat it would bring.

On one side of the road huge, semi-spherical fungi were growing—the only vegetation in the region—and we used them to make a pathetic fire which served to heat water from a little bit of snow. The spectacle offered by the two of us drinking our strange brew must have seemed as interesting to the Indians as their traditional dress seemed to us, because not a moment passed without one of them approaching to ask in broken Spanish just why we were pouring water into that strange artefact. The truck categorically refused to take us any further, so all of us had to walk about three kilometers in the snow. It was remarkable to see the Indians treading through the snow, their bare calloused feet not seeming to worry them, while we felt our toes freeze in the intense cold despite our boots and woolly socks. At a weary, steady pace, they trotted along like llamas in single file.

Saved from that rough patch, the truck continued with renewed passion and we soon cleared the highest pass, where there was a strange pyramid made of irregular-sized stones and crowned with a cross. As the truck passed, almost everyone spat and one or two crossed themselves. Intrigued, we asked what the significance of this strange ritual was but only the most complete of silences met us.

The sun was warming up and the temperature became more agreeable as we descended, always following the course of a river we had seen begin at the summit of the mountain and grow to a fair size. Snowcapped peaks looked down on us from all sides and herds of llamas and alpacas looked on without expression as the truck drove past, while several uncivilized vicuñas fled the disturbance.

At one of the many stops we made along the road, an Indian timidly approached us with his son who spoke good Spanish, and began to ask us all about the wonderful “land of Perón.” Our imaginations ignited by the

spectacular grandeur we were traveling through, it was easy for us to paint extraordinary events, embellishing to our hearts' desire the *capo's* exploits, filling the minds of our listeners with stories of the idyllic, beautiful life in our country. Through his son, the man asked us for a copy of the Argentine constitution with its declaration of the rights of the elderly, and we enthusiastically promised to send him one. When we resumed the trip, the old Indian took an appetizing corncob from beneath his clothes and offered it to us. We finished it off quickly, democratically dividing the kernels between us.

In the middle of the afternoon, with the heavy, gray sky bearing down on us, we passed an interesting place where erosion had worn the huge boulders on the roadside into feudalistic castles. They had battlements, gargoyles observing us disconcertingly, and a host of fabulous monsters that seemed to be standing guard, protecting the tranquility for the mythical characters who surely inhabited the place. The slight drizzle which for some time had brushed our faces became stronger and turned into a heavy downpour. The driver called out to the "Argentine doctors," inviting us into his cabin, the height of comfort in those parts. We immediately made friends with a schoolteacher from Puno, whom the government had sacked for being a member of APRA [American Popular Revolutionary Alliance]. The man, who clearly had indigenous blood and who moreover was an "Aprista"— which meant nothing to us—had many incredible stories of Indian customs and culture, delighting us with a thousand anecdotes and memories of his life as a teacher. Following the call of his Indian blood, he had sided with the Aymaras in the never-ending debates among the experts on the region against the Coyas, whom he qualified as cowardly *ladinos.*[5]

He also gave us the key to the strange ritual observed by our traveling companions earlier in the day. Arriving at the highest point of the mountain the Indian gifts all of his sadness to Pachamama, Mother Earth, in the symbolic form of a stone. These gradually amass to shape the pyramids we had seen. When the Spaniards arrived to conquer the region they immediately tried to destroy such beliefs and abolish such rituals, but without success. So the Spanish monks decided to accept the inevitable, placing a single cross atop each pile of stones. All this took place four centuries ago, as told by Garcilaso de la Vega [the son of an Inca princess

and a conquistador, was one of the chroniclers of the conquest], and judging by the number of Indians who made the sign of the cross, the religious didn't make a lot of progress. The rise of modern transport has meant the faithful now spit out chewed coca-leaves instead of placing stones, and this carries their troubles to rest with Pachamama.

The inspired voice of the teacher rose to a resounding pitch whenever he spoke about his Indians, the once rebellious Aymara race who had held the Inca armies in check, and it fell to a vacant depth when he spoke of the Indians' present condition, brutalized by modern civilization and by their compañeros, his bitter enemies the mestizos, who revenge themselves on the Aymaras for their own position halfway between two worlds. He spoke of the need to build schools that would orient individuals within their own world, enabling them to play a useful role within it; of the need to change fundamentally the present system of education, which, on the rare occasion it does offer Indians education (according only to the white man's criteria), simply fills them with shame and resentment, rendering them unable to help their fellow Indians and at the severe disadvantage of having to fight within a hostile white society that refuses to accept them. The destiny of those unhappy individuals is to stagnate in some minor bureaucratic position and die hoping that one of their children, thanks to the miraculous powers of a drop of colonizing blood in their veins, might somehow achieve the goal they aspire to until their last days. In the convulsive clenching of his fist one could perceive the confession of a man tormented by his own misfortune, and also the very desire he attributed to his hypothetical example. Wasn't he in fact a typical product of an "education" which damages the person receiving its favor, a concession to the magic power of that single "drop," even if it came from some poor mestizo woman sold to a local *cacique* or was the result of an Indian maid's rape by her drunken Spanish master?

But our journey was almost over and the teacher fell silent. The road curved and we crossed a bridge over the same river we had first seen early that morning as a tiny stream. Ilave was on the other side.

The Navel of the World

The word that most perfectly describes the city of Cuzco is "evocative." Intangible dust of another era settles on its streets, rising like the disturbed

sediment of a muddy lake when you touch its bottom. But there are two or three Cuzcos, or it's better to say, two or three ways the city can be summoned. When Mama Ocllo dropped her golden wedge into the soil and it sank effortlessly, the first Incas knew this was the place selected by Viracocha to be the permanent home for his chosen ones, who had left behind their nomadic lives to come as conquistadors to their promised land. With nostrils flaring zealously for new horizons, they watched as their formidable empire grew, always looking beyond the feeble barrier of the surrounding mountains. The converted nomads set to expanding Tahuantinsuyo, fortifying as they did so the center of their conquered territory—the navel of the world—Cuzco [the center of the Inca kingdom]. And here grew, as a necessary defense for the empire, the imposing Sacsahuamán, dominating the city from its heights and protecting the palaces and temples from the wrath of the enemies of the empire. The vision of this Cuzco emerges mournfully from the fortress destroyed by the stupidity of illiterate Spanish conquistadors, from the violated ruins of the temples, from the sacked palaces, from the faces of a brutalized race. This is the Cuzco inviting you to become a warrior and to defend, club in hand, the freedom and the life of the Inca.

High above the city another Cuzco can be seen, displacing the destroyed fortress: a Cuzco with colored-tile roofs, its gentle uniformity interrupted by the cupola of a baroque church; and as the city falls away it shows us only its narrow streets and its native inhabitants dressed in typical costume, all the local colors. This Cuzco invites you to be a hesitant tourist, to pass over things superficially and relax into the beauty beneath a leaden winter sky.

And there is yet another Cuzco, a vibrant city whose monuments bear witness to the formidable courage of the warriors who conquered the region in the name of Spain, the Cuzco to be found in museums and libraries, in the church facades and in the clear, sharp features of the white chiefs who even today feel pride in the conquest. This is the Cuzco asking you to pull on your armor and, mounted on the ample back of a powerful horse, cleave a path through the defenseless flesh of a naked Indian flock whose human wall collapses and disappears beneath the four hooves of the galloping beast.

Each one of these Cuzcos can be admired separately, and to each one we dedicated a part of our stay.

The Land of the Incas

Cuzco is completely surrounded by mountains that signified less a defense than a danger for its Inca inhabitants, who, in order to defend themselves, built the immense mass of a fortress, Sacsahuamán. This version of the story, at least, satisfies the superficial inquirer, a version which for obvious reasons I cannot discount. It's possible, however, that the fortress constituted the initial nucleus of the great city. In the period immediately after abandoning nomadic life, when the Incas were barely more than an ambitious tribe and defense against a numerically superior adversary was based around closely protecting the settled population, the walls of Sacsahuamán offered an ideal site. This double function of city and fortress explains some of the reasoning behind its construction, which does not make sense if its purpose was simply to repel an invading enemy, and much less so considering Cuzco lay defenseless on every other periphery. It is worth noting that the fortress is built in such a way that it controls the two steep valleys leading to the city. The serrated walls mean that when enemies attacked they could be held hostage on three flanks, and if they penetrated these defenses, they came up against a second, similar wall and then a third. The defenders have room to maneuver, enabling them to concentrate on their counterattack.

All this, and the subsequent glory of the city, creates the impression that the Quechua warriors were undefeated in the defense of their fortress against pounding enemies. Even though the fortifications are the expression of a highly inventive people, intuitive in mathematics, they seem to belong — in my view, at least—to the pre-Inca stage of their civilization, a period before they learned to appreciate the comforts of a material life; being a sober race the Quechuas didn't achieve a level of cultural splendor, but they did make considerable advances in the fields of architecture and the arts. The continued success of the Quechua warriors drove enemy tribes further from Cuzco. Leaving the secure confines of the fortress, that in any case could no longer contain their multiplying race, they spread down the neighboring valley along the stream whose waters they used. Highly conscious of their present glory, they turned their eyes to the past in search of an explanation for their superiority. In honor of the memory of a god whose omnipotence had allowed them to rise to dominance, they created

temples and the priest caste. In this way, expressing their greatness in stone, an imposing Cuzco grew into the city eventually conquered by the Spaniards.

Even today, when the bestial rage of the conquering rabble can be seen in each of the acts designed to eternalize the conquest, and the Inca caste has long since vanished as a dominant power, their stone blocks stand enigmatically, impervious to the ravages of time. The white troops sacked the already defeated city, attacking the Inca temples with unbridled fury. They unified their greed for the gold that covered the walls, in perfect representations of Inti the Sun God, with the sadistic pleasure of exchanging the joyful and life-giving symbol of a grieving people for the bereaved idol of a joyful people.

The temples to Inti were razed to their foundations or their walls were made to serve the ascent of the churches of the new religion: the cathedral was erected over the remains of a grand palace, and above the walls of the Temple of the Sun rose the Church of Santo Domingo, both lesson and punishment from the proud conqueror. And yet every so often the heart of America, shuddering with indignation, sends a nervous spasm through the gentle back of the Andes, and tumultuous shock waves assault the surface of the land. Three times the cuppola of proud Santo Domingo has collapsed from on high, to the rhythm of broken bones, and its worn walls have opened and fallen too. But the foundations they rest on are unmoved, the great blocks of the Temple of the Sun indifferently exhibit their gray stone; however colossal the disaster befalling its oppressor, not one of its huge rocks shifts from its place.

But Kon’s revenge is meager in the face of the magnitude of the insult. The gray stones have grown tired of pleading with their protector gods for the destruction of the abhorrent conquering race, and now they simply show an inanimate exhaustion—useful only for provoking the admiring grunts of some tourist or other. What use was the patient labor of the Indians, builders of the Inca Roca Palace, subtle sculptors of angular stone, when faced with the impetuous actions of the white conquistadors and their knowledge of brick work, vaulting and rounded arches?

The anguished Indian, waiting for the terrible vengeance of his gods, saw instead a cloud of churches rise, erasing even the possibility of a proud past. The six-meter walls of the Inca Roca Palace, considered by the

conquistadors to be useful only as weight bearers for their colonial palace, reflect in their perfect stone structures the cry of the defeated warrior.

But the race that created *Ollantay*[6] left something more than the conglomeration of Cuzco as a monument to its grand past. Along the Vilcanota or Urubamba rivers, over more than a hundred kilometers, the signs of the Inca past are scattered. The most important of them are always in the heights of the mountains, where their fortresses were impenetrable and secure from surprise attack. After trekking for two long hours along a rough path we reached the peak of Pisac; also arriving there, though long before us, were the swords of the Spanish soldiers, destroying Pisac's defenders, defenses and even its temple. Among the dispersed mass of disorganized stone you can perceive that it was once a defensive construction, the dwellings of the priests; the place where Intiwatana stayed and where he caught and tied up the midday sun. So little is left!

Tracing the course of the Vilcanota and passing by some relatively unimportant sites, we reached Ollantaytambo, a vast fortress where Manco II[7] rose up in arms against the Spaniards, resisting Hernando Pizarro's troops and founding the minor dynasty of the Four Incas. This dynasty coexisted with the Spanish Empire until its last effeminate representative was assassinated in Cuzco's main square, on the orders of Viceroy Toledo.

A rocky hill, no less than 100 meters high, plunges suddenly to the Vilcanota River. The fortress rests on top and its single vulnerable side, connected to its mountain neighbors by narrow paths, is guarded by stone defenses that easily impede the access of any attacking force similar in strength to the defenders. The lower part of the construction has a purely defensive purpose, its less steep areas split into some 20 easily defendable levels, making an attacker vulnerable to counterattack on each side. The upper part of the fortress contained the soldiers' quarters, and is crowned by a temple which probably housed their loot in the form of precious metal objects. But of all that not even a memory remains, and even the massive stone blocks that made up the temple have been removed from their resting place.

Near Sacsahuamán, on the road returning to Cuzco, there is an example of typical Inca construction which, in our guide's opinion, was a bathing place for the Incas. This seemed a little strange to me, given the distance

between the site and Cuzco, unless it was a ritual bathing place for the monarch only. The ancient Inca emperors (if this version is correct) must have had even tougher skins than their descendants because the water, though wonderful to drink, is extremely cold. The site, crowned with three deep trapezoidal recesses (whose form and purpose are unclear), is called Tambomachay and is at the entrance of the Valley of the Incas.

But the site the archaeological and “touristic” significance of which overwhelms all others in the region is Machu-Picchu, which in the indigenous language means Old Mountain. The name is completely divorced from the settlement which sheltered within its hold the last members of a free people. For [Hiram] Bingham, the [US] archaeologist who discovered the ruins [in 1911], the place was more than a refuge against invaders, but was the original settlement of the dominant Quechua race and a sacred site for them. Later, in the period of the Spanish conquest, it also became a hideout for the defeated army. At first glance there are several indications that the above-mentioned archaeologist was right. In Ollantaytambo, for example, the most important defensive constructions face away from Machu-Picchu, even though the slope behind is not steep enough to ensure effective defense against attack from there, possibly suggesting that their backs were covered in that direction. A further indication is their preoccupation with keeping the area hidden from outsiders, even after all resistance had been crushed. The last Inca himself was captured far from Machu-Picchu, where Bingham found skeletons that were almost all female. He identified them as being those of virgins of the Temple of the Sun, a religious order whose members the Spaniards never managed to flush out. As is customary in constructions like this, the Temple of the Sun with its famous Intiwatana crowns the city. It is carved from the rock which also serves as its pedestal, and close by a series of carefully polished stones suggest that this is a very important place. Looking out across the river are three trapezoidal windows typical of Quechua architecture, which Bingham identified as the windows through which the Ayllus brothers in Inca mythology came to the outside world to show the chosen people the path to their promised land. To my understanding the argument is a little strained. The interpretation has, of course, been contested by a great many prestigious researchers. There is also voluminous debate about the function of the Temple of the Sun whose discoverer,

Bingham, maintained it was a circular enclosure, similar to the temple dedicated to the same sun god in Cuzco. Whatever the case, the form and cut of the stones suggest it was of principal importance, and it is thought that beneath the huge stones that form the temple's base lies the tomb of the Incas.

Here you can easily appreciate the difference between the different social classes of the village, each of them occupying a distinct place according to their grouping, and remaining more or less independent from the rest of the community. It's a pity they knew no other roofing matter besides straw; now there are no examples of roofing left, even on the most luxurious sites. But for architects who had no knowledge of vaulting or arch supports, it must have been very difficult to resolve this problem. In the buildings reserved for the warriors, we were shown cavities in the stone walls, like small chambers; on either side of them holes just big enough for a man's arm to pass through had been hollowed out. This was apparently a place of physical punishment; the victim was forced to place both arms through the respective holes and was then pushed backwards until his bones broke. I was unconvinced about the effectiveness of the procedure and introduced my limbs in the manner indicated. Alberto pushed me slowly: the slight pressure provoked excruciating pain and the sensation that I would be torn apart completely if he continued to press my chest.

But you can really appreciate the imposing magnitude of the city-fortress from the view at Huayna-Picchu ("Young Mountain"), rising some 200 meters higher. The place must have been used as a kind of lookout point rather than as housing or as fortifications because the ruins are only of minor importance. Machu-Picchu is impregnable on two of its sides, defended by an abyss dropping a sheer 300 meters to the river and a narrow gorge linking up with the "young mountain"; its most vulnerable side is defensible from a succession of terraces, making any attack against it extremely difficult, while toward Machu-Picchu's face, looking approximately south, vast fortifications and the natural narrowing of the hilltop make a difficult pass through which to attack. If you remember also that the torrential Vilcanota rushes around the base of the mountain, you can see that the first inhabitants of Machu-Picchu were wise in their choice.

In reality it hardly matters what the primitive origins of the city are. It's best, in any case, to leave discussion of the subject to archaeologists. The

most important and irrefutable thing, however, is that here we found the pure expression of the most powerful indigenous race in the Americas—untouched by a conquering civilization and full of immensely evocative treasures between its walls. The walls themselves have died from the tedium of having no life between them. The spectacular landscape circling the fortress supplies an essential backdrop, inspiring dreamers to wander its ruins for the sake of it; North American tourists, constrained by their practical world view, are able to place those members of the disintegrating tribes they may have seen in their travels among these once-living walls, unaware of the moral distance separating them, since only the semi-indigenous spirit of the South American can grasp the subtle differences.

Saint Guevara's Day

On Saturday, June 14, 1952, I, just a lad, turned 24, on the cusp of that transcendental quarter century, silver wedding of a life, which, all things considered, has not treated me so badly. Early in the morning I went to the river, to try my luck again with the fish, but that sport is like gambling: one starts out winning and ends up losing. In the afternoon we played football and I occupied my usual place in goal, with better results than on earlier occasions. In the evening, after passing by Dr. Bresani's[8] house for a delightful, huge meal, they threw a party for us in the dining room of the colony, with a lot of the Peruvian national drink, *pisco.* Alberto is quite experienced regarding its effects on the central nervous system. With everyone slightly drunk and in high spirits, the colony's director toasted us warmly, and I, *"piscoed,"* replied with something elaborate, like the following:

"Well, it's my duty to respond to the toast offered by Dr. Bresani with something more than a conventional gesture. In our presently precarious state as travelers, we only have recourse to words and I would now like to use them to express my thanks, and those of my traveling compañero, to all of the staff of the colony who, almost without knowing us, have given us this beautiful demonstration of their affection, celebrating my birthday as if it were an intimate celebration for one of your own. But there is something more. Within a few days we will be leaving Peruvian territory, so these words have the secondary intention of being a farewell, and I would like to

stress our gratitude to all the people of this country, who have unfailingly shown us their warmest hospitality since we entered Peru via Tacna.

"I would also like to say something else, unrelated to the theme of this toast. Although our insignificance means we can't be spokespeople for such a noble cause, we believe, and after this journey more firmly than ever, that the division of [Latin] America into unstable and illusory nations is completely fictional. We constitute a single mestizo race, which from Mexico to the Magellan Straits bears notable ethnographical similarities. And so, in an attempt to rid myself of the weight of small-minded provincialism, I propose a toast to Peru and to a United Latin America."

My oratory offering was received with great applause. The party, consisting in these parts of drinking as much alcohol as possible, continued until 3:00 in the morning, when we finally called it a day…

This Strange Twentieth Century

The worst of my asthma attack has now passed and I feel almost well, though sometimes I resort to my new acquisition, a French inhaler. I feel Alberto's absence so sharply. It seems like my flanks are unguarded from some hypothetical attack. At every other moment I'm turning around to share an observation with him only to realize he's not there.

It's true, there's not really much to complain about: thoroughly looked after, good food and a lot of it, and the anticipation of returning home to start studying again and to complete the degree that will enable me to practice. Yet the idea of splitting up definitively does not make me completely happy; the many months we've been side by side, through good and bad, accustomed to dreaming similar dreams in similar situations, have brought us so much closer together. With these ideas constantly turning over in my mind, I find myself drifting away from the center of Caracas. The homes in the suburbs are spaced much further apart. Caracas extends along the length of a narrow valley, enclosing and restraining it on its edges, so that on a short walk you'll be climbing the surrounding hills, and there, with the progressive city laid out before your feet, you'll begin to see a new aspect of its multifaceted makeup. The blacks, those magnificent examples of the African race who have maintained their racial purity thanks to their lack of an affinity with bathing, have seen their territory invaded by a new

kind of slave: the Portuguese. And the two ancient races have now begun a hard life together, fraught with bickering and squabbles. Discrimination and poverty unite them in the daily fight for survival but their different ways of approaching life separate them completely: the black is indolent and a dreamer; spending his meager wage on frivolity or drink; the European has a tradition of work and saving, which has pursued him as far as this corner of America and drives him to advance himself, even independently of his own individual aspirations.

At this elevation the concrete houses have totally disappeared and only adobe huts reign. I peer into one of them. It is a room half separated by a partition, with a fireplace and table and a heap of straw on the ground, apparently serving as beds. Various bony cats and a mangy dog play with three completely naked black children. Rising from the fire, acrid smoke fills the room. The black mother, frizzy hair and sagging breasts, is cooking, assisted by a girl of about 15, who is dressed. At the door of the hut we get into a conversation and after a while I ask if they will pose for a photo, which they categorically refuse to do unless I give it to them straight away. In vain I try to explain that I have to develop it first, but no, they want it then and there, or no ball game. Eventually I promise to hand it over straight away, but now they are suspicious and don’t want to cooperate. One of the kids escapes to play with his friends while I continue chatting with the family. In the end, I stand guard at the door, camera in hand, pretending to snap anyone who pokes out their head. We play around like this for a while until I see the little kid returning carefree on a new bicycle; I focus and press the button but the effect is disastrous. To elude the photo, the kid swerves and falls to the ground, bursting into tears. Immediately they all lose their fear of the camera and rush out to hurl abuse at me. I withdraw somewhat apprehensively because they are excellent stone throwers, followed by the insults of the group—including the height of contempt: “Portuguese.”

Littered along the edges of the road are containers for transporting cars, used by the Portuguese as dwellings. In one of these, where a black family lives, I can just glimpse a brand new refrigerator, and from many of them radios blare music which their owners play at maximum volume. New cars are parked outside the most miserable “homes.” All kinds of aircraft pass overhead, sowing the air with noise and silver reflections and there, at my

feet, lies Caracas, city of the eternal spring. Its center is threatened by the invasion of red tiled roofs that converge with the flat roofs of modern buildings. But something else will allow the yellowy color of its colonial buildings to live on, even after they have disappeared from the city maps: the spirit of Caracas, impervious to the lifestyle of the North and stubbornly rooted in the retrograde semi-pastoral conditions of its colonial past.

A Note in the Margin

The stars drew light across the night sky in that little mountain village, and the silence and the cold made the darkness vanish away. It was—I don't know how to explain it—as if everything solid melted away into the ether, eliminating all individuality and absorbing us, rigid, into the immense darkness. Not a single cloud to lend perspective to the space blocked any portion of the starry sky. Less than a few meters away the dim light of a lamp lost its power to fade the darkness.

The man's face was indistinct in the shadows; I could only see what seemed like the spark of his eyes and the gleam of his four front teeth.

I still can't say whether it was the atmosphere or the personality of that individual that prepared me for the revelation, but I know that many times and from many different people I had heard those same arguments and that they had never made an impression on me. Our interlocutor was, in fact, a very interesting character. From a country in Europe, he escaped the knife of dogmatism as a young man, he knew the taste of fear (one of the few experiences that makes you value life), and afterwards he had wandered from country to country, gathering thousands of adventures, until he and his bones finally ended up in this isolated region, patiently waiting for the moment of great reckoning to arrive.

After exchanging a few meaningless words and platitudes, each of us marking territory, the discussion began to falter and we were about to go our separate ways, when he let out his idiosyncratic, childlike laugh, highlighting the asymmetry of his four front incisors:

"The future belongs to the people, and gradually, or in one strike, they will take power, here and in every country.

"The terrible thing is the people need to be educated, and this they cannot do before taking power, only after. They can only learn at the cost of

their own mistakes, which will be very serious and will cost many innocent lives. Or perhaps not, maybe those lives will not have been innocent because they will have committed the huge sin against nature; meaning, a lack of ability to adapt. All of them, those unable to adapt—you and I, for example— will die cursing the power they helped, through great sacrifice, to create. Revolution is impersonal; it will take their lives, even utilizing their memory as an example or as an instrument for domesticating the youth who follow them. My sin is greater because I, more astute and with greater experience, call it what you like, will die knowing that my sacrifice stems only from an inflexibility symbolizing our rotten civilization, which is crumbling. I also know—and this won't alter the course of history or your personal view of me—that you will die with a clenched fist and a tense jaw, the epitome of hatred and struggle, because you are not a symbol (some inanimate example) but a genuine member of the society to be destroyed; the spirit of the beehive speaks through your mouth and motivates your actions. You are as useful as I am, but you are not aware of how useful your contribution is to the society that sacrifices you."

I saw his teeth and the cheeky grin with which he foretold history, I felt his handshake and, like a distant murmur, his formal goodbye. The night, folding in at contact with his words, overtook me again, enveloping me within it. But despite his words, I now knew… I knew that when the great guiding spirit cleaves humanity into two antagonistic halves, I would be with the people. I know this, I see it printed in the night sky that I, eclectic dissembler of doctrine and psychoanalyst of dogma, howling like one possessed, will assault the barricades or the trenches, will take my bloodstained weapon and, consumed with fury, slaughter any enemy who falls into my hands. And I see, as if a great exhaustion smothers this fresh exaltation, I see myself, immolated in the genuine revolution, the great equalizer of individual will, proclaiming the ultimate *mea culpa.* I feel my nostrils dilate, savoring the acrid smell of gunpowder and blood, the enemy's death; I steel my body, ready to do battle, and prepare myself to be a sacred space within which the bestial howl of the triumphant proletariat can resound with new energy and new hope.

1. Literally, “the Powerful One,” Alberto Granado’s Norton 500 cc motorcycle.
2. The Chilean Communist Party was banned and many members persecuted under the so-called Law for the Defense of Democracy (1948–58).
3. Carlos Ibáñez del Campo was the president of Chile from 1952 to 1958. He was a populist who promised to legalize the Communist Party if elected.
4. Salvador Allende later became the elected president of Chile (1970–73). He was overthrown on September 11, 1973, in the coup led by General Pinochet.
5. A term used to describe Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, often used to refer to Indians who adopt Spanish ways.
6. An epic drama of the Inca General Ollanta, who was put to death for falling in love with an Inca princess.
7. Put on the Inca throne by Francisco Pizarro after helping to unseat Atahualpa, Manco II in turn fought the Spaniards. His first rebellion was crushed at Ollantaytambo in 1536.
8. Dr. Federico Bresani Silva (1918–95) was the director of the San Pablo leper colony, who made an important contribution to the study of leprosy in Latin America.

A Second Look at Latin America (1953–56)

These notes are part of Ernesto's diary from his second journey through Latin America, beginning in July 1953. He gave it the title *Otra vez* (once again), but unlike the "Motorcycle Diaries" of his first trip, Che never revised or reconstructed this diary, which was interrupted by his departure from Mexico in November 1956, when he left for Cuba on board the cabin cruiser *Granma* with Fidel Castro and the other members of the July 26 Movement. The selection is from his notes on the countries he visited—Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico—revealing the importance this second trip had in shaping his development as a revolutionary.

Excerpts from *Latin America Diaries*

Departure

The sun falls timidly against our backs as we walk through La Quiaca's bare hills. I turn recent events over in my mind. The departure, with so many people, quite a few tears, and the peculiar looks from those in second class at the profusion of fine clothes, leather coats, etc. of those who came out to farewell two strange-looking *snobs* loaded down with so much luggage. The name of my sidekick has changed—Alberto is now Calica [Carlos Ferrer][1]— but the journey is the same: two distinct wills extending out into the Americas, not knowing exactly what it is they seek, nor in which direction it lies.

The sparse hills, covered with a gray mist, lend color and tone to the landscape. A small stream in front of us separates Argentina from Bolivian territory. Across a miniature railway bridge, two flags face each other: the Bolivian, new and brightly colored; the other old, dirty and faded, as though it had begun to grasp the poverty of its symbolism.

A couple of policemen tell us that someone from Alta Gracia, Córdoba (my hometown as a child), is working with them. This turns out to be Tiqui Vidora, one of my childhood playmates. A strange rediscovery in this far corner of Argentina.

An unrelenting headache and asthma force me to slow down, and we spend three particularly boring days in the village there before departing for La Paz. Mentioning that we are traveling second class elicits an instantaneous loss of interest in us. But here, like anywhere else, the possibility we might provide a good tip ensures a certain level of attention..

Bolivia

In Bolivia now and, after a cursory inspection from both Argentine and Chilean customs, there have been no further delays.

From Villazón, the train struggles north through totally arid hills, ravines and trails. The color green is proscribed here. The train recovers its appetite on the dry pampas, where saltpeter becomes more common. But when the night arrives, everything is lost in a cold that creeps in so slowly. We have a cabin now, but in spite of everything—including extra blankets—a vague chill enters our bones.

The next morning our boots are frozen and our feet hurt. The water in the toilets and even in our flasks has frozen. Unkempt and with dirty faces, we feel slightly anxious as we make our way to the dining car, but the faces of our traveling companions put us at ease.

At 4:00 in the afternoon, the train approaches the gorge in which La Paz nestles. A small and very beautiful city spreads through the valley’s rugged terrain, with the eternally snowcapped figure of Illimani watching over it. The final few kilometers take over an hour to complete. The train seems fixed on a tangent to avoid the city, but then it turns and continues its descent.

It’s a Saturday afternoon and the people we have been recommended to see are hard to find, so we spend the time changing our clothes and ridding ourselves of the journey’s grime.

We begin Sunday by going to see the people who have been recommended to us and making contact with the Argentine community.

La Paz is the Shanghai of the Americas. Many adventurers and a marvelous range of nationalities have come here to stagnate or thrive in this polychromatic, mestiza city that determines the destiny of this country.

The so-called fine folk, the cultured people, have been surprised by events and curse the attention now being paid to the Indian and the mestizo, but I divined in all of them a faint spark of nationalist enthusiasm with regard to some of the government's actions.

Nobody denies that the situation represented by the power of the three tin mine giants had to come to an end, and young people believe that this has been a step forward in the struggle for greater equality between the people and the wealthy.

On the evening of July 15, there was a long and boring torchlight procession—a kind of demonstration—although it was interesting because of the way people expressed their support by firing shots from Mausers, or *Piri-pipi,* the terrible repeating guns.

The next day there was a never-ending parade of workers' guilds, schools and unions, with the regular song of Mausers. Every few steps, one of the leaders of the companies into which the procession was divided would shout, "Compañeros of such-and-such-a-guild, long live Bolivia! Glory to the early martyrs of our independence! Glory to Pedro Domingo Murillo! Glory to Guzmán! Glory to Villarroel!" This recitative was delivered wearily, and accordingly a chorus of monotonous voices responded. It was a picturesque demonstration, but not particularly vital. Their weary gait and general lack of enthusiasm drained it of any vitality, while, according to those in the know, the energetic faces of the miners were missing.

On another morning we took a truck to Las Yungas. Initially, we climbed 4,600 meters to a place called the Summit, and then came down slowly along a cliff road flanked almost the entire way by a vertical precipice. We spent two magnificent days in Las Yungas, but we could have done with two women to provide the eroticism missing from the greenery that assaulted us everywhere we looked. On the lush mountain slopes, which plunged several hundred meters to the river below and were protected by an overcast sky, were scatterings of coconut palms with their ringed trunks; banana trees that, from the distance, looked like green propellers rising from the jungle; orange and other citrus trees; coffee trees,

rosy red with their beans, and other fruit and tropical trees. All this was offset by the spindly form of the papaya tree, its static shape somehow reminiscent of a llama, or of other tropical fruit trees.

On one patch of land, Salesian priests were running a farm school. One of them, a courteous German, showed us around. A huge quantity of fruit and vegetables were being cultivated and tended very carefully. We didn't see the children, who were in class, but when he spoke of similar farms in Argentina and Peru I remembered the indignant remark of a teacher I knew: "As a Mexican educationalist said, these are the only places in the world where animals are treated better than people." So I said nothing in reply. For white people, especially Europeans, the Indian continues to be an animal, whatever habit they happen to be wearing.

We made the return journey in the small truck of some guys who had spent the weekend in the same hotel. We reached La Paz looking rather strange, but it was a quick and reasonably comfortable trip.

La Paz, ingenuous and candid like a young girl from the provinces, proudly displays her marvelous public buildings. We checked out the new constructions, the diminutive university overlooking the entire city from its courtyards, the municipal library, etc.

The formidable beauty of Mt. Illimani radiates a soft light, perpetually illuminated by the halo of snow which nature has lent it for eternity. When twilight falls, the solitary mountain peak becomes most solemn and imposing.

There's a *hidalgo*[2] from Tucumán here who reminds me of the mountain's august serenity. Exiled from Argentina, he is the center and the driving force of the Argentine community in La Paz, which sees in him a leader and a friend. To the rest of the world, his political ideas are well and truly outdated, but somehow he keeps them independent of the proletarian hurricane that has been broken loose across our bellicose sphere. He extends his friendly hand to all Argentines, without asking who they are or why they have come. He casts his august serenity over us, miserable mortals, extending his patriarchal, lasting protection.

We remain stranded, waiting for something to turn up, waiting to see what happens on the 2nd. But something sinuous and big-bellied has crossed my path. We'll see…

At last we visited the Bolsa Negra mine. We took the road south up to a height of some 5,000 meters before descending into the depths of the valley where the mine administration is located, the seam itself being on one of the slopes.

It's an imposing sight. Behind us, the august Illimani, serene and majestic; in front of us, the white Mururata; and closer, the mine buildings that look like fragments of glass tossed off the mountain and remaining there at the fanciful whim of the terrain. A vast spectrum of dark tones illuminates the mountain. The silence of the idle mine assaults those who, like us, do not understand its language.

Our reception was cordial; they gave us lodging and then we slept. The next morning, a Sunday, one of the engineers took us to a natural lake fed by one of Mururata's glaciers. In the afternoon we visited the mill where tungsten is refined from the ore produced in the mine.

Briefly, the process is as follows. The rock extracted from the mine is divided into three categories: the first has a 70 percent extractable deposit; another part has some wolfram, but in lesser quantity; and a third layer, which you could say has no value, is tipped onto the slopes. The second category goes to the mill on a wire rail or cableway, as they call it in Bolivia; there it is tipped out and pounded into smaller pieces, after which another mill refines it further, before it is passed through water several times to separate out the metal as a fine dust.

The director of the mill, a very competent Sr. Tenza, has planned a number of reforms that should result in increased production and the better exploitation of the mineral.

The next day we visited the excavated gallery. Carrying the waterproof bags we'd been given, a carbide lamp and a pair of rubber boots, we entered the black and unsettling atmosphere of the mine. We spent two or three hours checking buffers, noting the seams that disappear into the depths of the mountain, climbing through narrow openings to different levels, feeling the racket of the cargo being thrown onto wagons and sent down for collection on another level, watching the pneumatic drills prepare holes for the load.

But the mine's heart was not beating. It lacked the energy of the arms of those who every day tear from the earth their load of ore, arms that on this

day, August 2, the Day of the Indian and of Agrarian Reform,[3] were in La Paz defending the revolution.

The miners arrived back in the evening, stone-faced and wearing colored plastic helmets that made them look like warriors from foreign lands. We were captivated by their impassive faces, the unwavering sound of unloading material echoing off the mountain and the valley that dwarfed the truck carrying them.

In present conditions, Bolsa Negra can go on producing for five more years. But its production will cease unless a gallery some thousands of meters long can be linked with the seam. Such a gallery is being planned. These days this is the only thing that keeps Bolivia going, and it's a mineral the Americans want; so the government has ordered an increase in production. A 30 percent increase has already been achieved thanks to the intelligence and tenacity of the engineers in charge.

The amiable Dr. Revilla very kindly invited us to his home. We set off at 4:00, taking advantage of a truck. We spent the night in a small town called Palca, and arrived in La Paz early.

Now we are waiting for an [illegible] in order to be on our way.

Gustavo Torlinchen is a great photographic artist. Apart from a public exhibition and some work in his private collection, we had an opportunity to see him at work. His simple technique supports a more important, methodical composition, resulting in remarkably good photos. We joined him on an Andean Club trip from La Paz that went to Chacaltaya and then the water sources of the electricity company that supplies La Paz.

Another day I visited the Ministry of Peasant Affairs, where they treated me with extreme politeness. It's a strange place where masses of Indians from different highland groups wait their turn for an audience. Each group has a unique costume and a leader—or indoctrinator—who addresses them in their particular language. Employees spray them with DDT as they enter.

Finally, everything was ready for us to leave; each of us had a romantic contact to leave behind. My farewell was more on an intellectual level, without too much sentiment, but I think there is something between us, she and I.

The last evening saw toasts at Nougués's house—so many that I left my camera there. In all the confusion, Calica left for Copacabana alone, while I

stayed another day, using it to sleep and to retrieve my camera.

After a very beautiful journey beside the lake, I scrounged my way to Tiquina and then made it to Copacabana. We stayed in the best hotel and the following day hired a boat to take us to Isla del Sol.

They woke us at 5:00 a.m. and we set off for the island. There was very little wind so we had to do some rowing. We reached the island at 11:00 a.m. and visited an Inca site. I heard about some more ruins, so we urged the boatman to take us there. It was interesting, especially scratching around in the ruins where we found some relics, including an idol representing a woman who pretty much fulfilled all my dreams. The boatman didn't seem eager to return, but we convinced him to set sail. He made a complete hash of it, however, and we had to spend the night in a miserable little hut with straw for mattresses.

We rowed back the next morning, working like mules against the exhaustion that overcame us. We lost the day sleeping and resting, and resolved to leave the following morning by donkey; we then had second thoughts and decided to postpone our departure until the afternoon. I booked a ride on a truck, but it left before we arrived with our bags, leaving us stranded until we finally managed to get a ride in a van. Then our odyssey began: a two-kilometer walk carting hefty bags. Eventually we found ourselves two porters and amid laughter and cursing we reached our lodgings. One of the Indians, whom we nicknamed Túpac Amaru, was an unhappy sight: Each time he sat down to rest we had to help him back to his feet, as he could not stand up alone. We slept like logs.

The next day we met with the unpleasant surprise that the policeman was not in his office, so we watched the trucks leave, unable to do a thing. The day passed in total boredom.

The next day, comfortably installed in a "couchette," we traveled beside the lake toward Puno. Nearby, some *tolora* blossoms were flowering—we hadn't seen any since Tiquina. At Puno we passed through the last customs post, where I had two books confiscated: *Men and Women in the Soviet Union*, and a Ministry of Peasant Affairs publication, which they loudly proclaimed as "red, red, red." After some banter with the chief of police I agreed to look for a copy for him in Lima. We slept in a little hotel near the railway station.

We were about to climb into a second-class carriage with all our gear when a policeman proposed (with an air of intrigue) that we could travel free to Cuzco in first class using two of their badges. So, of course, we agreed. We therefore had a very comfortable ride, paying them the cost of our second-class tickets.

Costa Rica

The next day we missed the 2:00 p.m. train and resigned ourselves to one leaving at 7:00 the next morning. Arriving at Progreso, we then had to hoof it to the Costa Rican coast, where we were received very well. I played football despite my bad foot.

We left early the next morning, and after losing our way we found the right road and walked for two hours through mud. We made it to the railway terminal, where we got talking with an inspector who, incidentally, had wanted to go to Argentina but hadn't been given leave. We reached the port and pressured the captain for the fare. He conceded, but not on the question of accommodation. Two employees took pity on us, so here we are installed in their rooms, sleeping on the floor and feeling very content.

The famous *"Pachuca,"* which transports *pachucos* [bums], is leaving port tomorrow, Sunday. We now have beds. The hospital is comfortable and you can get proper medical attention, but its comforts vary depending on your position in the [United Fruit] Company. As always, the class spirit of the gringos is clearly evident.

Golfito is a real gulf, deep enough for ships of 26 feet to enter easily. It has a little wharf and enough housing to accommodate the 10,000 company employees. The heat is intense, but the place is very pretty. Hills rise to 100 meters almost out of the sea, their slopes covered with tropical vegetation that surrenders only to the constant presence of human activity. The town is divided into clearly defined zones, with guards to prevent unwanted movement. Of course, the gringos live in the nicest area, a little like Miami. The poor are kept separate, shut away behind the four walls of their own homes and restrictive class lines.

Food is the responsibility of a decent guy who is now also a good friend: Alfredo Fallas.

Medina is my roommate, also a decent guy. There's a Costa Rican medical student, the son of a doctor, as well as a Nicaraguan teacher and journalist in voluntary exile from Somoza.

The *"Pachuca"* left Golfito at 1:00 p.m. with us on board. We were well stocked with food for the two-day voyage. The sea became a little rough in the afternoon and the *Río Grande* (the ship's real name) started to be tossed about. Nearly all the passengers, including Gualo, started vomiting. I stayed outside with a black woman, Socorro, who had picked me up and was as horny as a toad, having spent 16 years on her back.

Quepos is another banana port, now pretty much abandoned by the company, which replaced the banana plantations with cocoa and palm-oil trees that gave less of a return. It has a very pretty beach.

I spent the whole day between the dodges and smirks of the black woman, arriving in Puntarenas at 6:00 in the evening. We had to wait a good while there, because six prisoners had escaped and couldn't be found. We visited an address Alfredo Fallas had given us, with a letter from him for a Sr. Juan Calderón Gómez.

The guy worked a thousand miracles and gave us 21 *colones.* Arriving in San José we remembered the scornful words of a joker back in Buenos Aires: "Central America is all estates: you've got the Costa Rican estate, the Tacho Somoza estate, etc."

A letter from Alberto, evoking images of luxury trips, has made me want to see him again. According to his plan, he'll go to the United States in March. Calica is destitute in Caracas.

We're firing blanks into the air here. They give us *mate* at the embassy. Our supposed friends don't seem to be good for anything. One is a radio director and presenter, a hopeless character. Tomorrow we'll try to get an interview with Ulate.

A day half wasted. Ulate was very busy and couldn't see us. Rómulo Betancourt has gone to the countryside. The day after next we'll appear in *El Diario de Costa Rica* with photos and everything, plus a big string of lies.[4] We haven't met anyone important, but we did meet a Puerto Rican, a former suitor of Luzmila Oller, who introduced us to some other people. Tomorrow I might get to visit the Costa Rican leprosy hospital.

I didn’t see the leprosarium, but I did meet two excellent people: Dr. Arturo Romero, a tremendously cultured man who due to various intrigues has been removed from the leprosarium board; and Dr. Alfonso Trejos, a researcher and a very fine person.

I visited the hospital, and just this morning, the leprosarium. We have a great day ahead. A chat with a Dominican short-story writer and revolutionary, Juan Bosch, and with the Costa Rican communist leader Manuel Mora Valverde.

The meeting with Juan Bosch was very interesting. He’s a literary person with clear ideas and leftist tendencies. We didn’t talk literature, just politics. He characterized Batista as a thug among thugs. He is a personal friend of Rómulo Betancourt and defended him warmly, as he did Prío Socarrás and Pepe Figueres.[5] He says Perón has no popular influence in Latin America, and that in 1945 he wrote an article denouncing him as the most dangerous demagogue in the Americas. The discussion continued on very friendly terms.

In the afternoon we met Manuel Mora Valverde, who is a gentle man, slow and deliberate, but he has a number of tic-like gestures suggesting a great internal unease, a dynamism held in check by method. He gave us a thorough account of recent Costa Rican politics:

> Calderón Guardia is a rich man who came to power with the support of the United Fruit Company and through the influence of local landowners. He ruled for two years until World War II, when Costa Rica sided with the Allies. The State Department’s first measure was that land owned by local Germans should be confiscated, particularly land where coffee was cultivated. This was done, and the land was subsequently sold, in obscure deals involving some of Calderón Guardia’s ministers. This lost him the support of all the country’s landowners, except United Fruit. The company employees are anti-Yankee, in response to its exploitation.
>
> As it was, Calderón Guardia was left with no support whatsoever, to the point where he could not leave his house for the abuse he was subjected to on the streets. At that point the Communist Party offered him its support, on the condition he adopt some basic labor

legislation and reshuffle his cabinet. In the meantime, Otilio Ulate, then a man of the left and personal friend of Mora, warned the latter of a plan Calderón Guardia had devised to trap him. Mora went ahead with the alliance, and the popularity of Calderón's government soared as the first gains began to be felt by the working class.

Then the problem of succession was posed as Calderón's term was coming to an end. The communists, in favor of a united front of national reconciliation to pursue the government's working-class policies, proposed Ulate. The rival candidate, León Cortés, was totally opposed to the idea and continued to stand. At this time, using his paper *El Diario de Costa Rica,* Ulate began a vigorous campaign against the labor legislation, causing a split in the left and Don Otilio's about-face.

The elections saw the victory of Teodoro Picado, a feeble intellectual ruined by whisky, although relatively left leaning, who formed a government with communist support. These tendencies persisted during his entire period of office, although the chief of police was a Cuban colonel, an FBI agent imposed by the United States.

In the final stages, the disgruntled capitalists organized a huge strike of the banking and industry sectors, which the government did not know how to break. Students who took to the streets were fired on and some were wounded. Teodoro Picado panicked. Elections were approaching and there were two candidates: Calderón Guardia again, and Otilio Ulate. Teodoro Picado, opposing the communists, handed over the electoral machine to Ulate, keeping the police for himself. The elections were fraudulent; Ulate was triumphant. An appeal to nullify the result was lodged with the electoral commission, with the opposition also requesting a ruling on the alleged violations, stating it would abide by the verdict. The court refused to hear the appeal (with one of the three judges dissenting), so an application was made to the Chamber of Deputies and the election result was set aside. A giant lawsuit was then launched, with the people by now roused to fever pitch. But here a parenthesis is needed.

In Guatemala, Arévalo's presidency had led to the formation of what came to be known as the Socialist Republics of the Caribbean.

The Guatemalan president was supported in this by Prío Socarrás, Rómulo Betancourt, Juan Rodríguez, a Dominican millionaire, Chamorro and others. The original revolutionary plan was to land in Nicaragua and remove Somoza from power, since El Salvador and Honduras would fall without much of a fight. But Argüello, a friend of Figueres, raised the question of Costa Rica and its convulsive internal situation, so Figueres flew to Guatemala. The alliance came into operation; Figueres led a revolt in Cartago and with arms swiftly took over the aerodrome there, in case any air support was necessary.

Resistance was organized rapidly, however, and the people attacked the barracks to obtain weapons, which the government was refusing to give them. The revolution had no popular support—Ulate had not participated—and was doomed to failure. But it was the popular forces headed by the communists who had won—a conclusion extremely disconcerting for the bourgeoisie, and with them, Teodoro Picado. Picado flew to Nicaragua to confer with Somoza and obtain weapons, only to find that a top US official would also be at the meeting, and who demanded, as the price for assistance, that Picado should eradicate communism in Costa Rica (thereby guaranteeing the fall of Manuel Mora), and that each weapon supplied would come with a man attached to it—signifying an invasion of Costa Rica.

Picado did not accept this at that time, as it would have meant betraying the communists who had supported him throughout the struggle. But the revolution was in its death throes and the power of the communists so frightened the reactionary elements in the government that they boycotted the defense of the country until the invaders were at the gates of San José and then abandoned the capital for Liberia, close to Nicaragua. At the same time, the rest of the army went over to the Nicaraguans, taking all the available ammunition. A pact was made with Figueres, underwritten by the Mexican embassy, and the popular forces actually laid down their weapons in front of that embassy. Figueres did not keep his side of the deal, however, and the Mexican embassy was unable to enforce it because of the hostility of the US State Department. Mora was deported. It was pure luck he escaped with his life as the plane he was traveling in came under

machine-gun fire. The plane landed in the US Canal Zone, where the Yankee police arrested him and handed him over to the Panamanian chief of police, at that time Colonel Remón. The Yankee journalists wanting to question him were expelled, and then he had an altercation with Remón and was locked up. Finally he went to Cuba, from where Grau San Martín expelled him to Mexico. He was able to return to Costa Rica during the Ulate period.

Figueres was faced with the problem that his forces consisted of only 100 Puerto Ricans and the 600 or so men who formed the Caribbean Legion. Although he initially told Mora that his program was designed for a 12-year period and that he had no intention of surrendering power to the corrupt bourgeoisie represented by Ulate, he had to make a deal with the bourgeoisie and agreed to give up power after only a year and a half, an undertaking he fulfilled after he had fixed the election machinery to his benefit and organized a cruel repression. When the time was up, Ulate returned to power and kept it for the appointed four years. It was not a feature of his government to uphold the established freedoms or to respect the progressive legislation achieved under the previous governments. But it did repeal the anti-landowner 'law on parasites.'

The fraudulent elections gave Figueres victory over the candidate representing the Calderón tradition, who now lives as a closely monitored exile in Mexico. In Mora's view, Figueres has a number of good ideas, but because they lack any scientific basis he keeps going astray. He divides the United States into two: the State Department (very just) and the capitalist trusts (the dangerous octopuses). What will happen when Figueres sees the light and stops having any illusion about the goodness of the United States? Will he fight or give up? That is the dilemma. We shall see!

A day that left no trace: boredom, reading, weak jokes. Roy, a little old pensioner from Panama, came in for me to look at him because he thought he was going to die from a tapeworm. He has chronic salteritis.

The meeting with Rómulo Betancourt did not have that history-lesson quality of the one with Mora. My impression is that he's a politician with some firm social ideas in his head, but otherwise he sways toward whatever

is to his best advantage. In principle, he is solidly with the United States. He spoke lies about the Río Pact and spent most of the time raging about the communists.

We said our goodbyes to everyone, especially León Bosch, a really first-rate guy, then took a bus to Alajuela and started hitching. After several adventures we arrived this evening in Liberia, the capital of Guanacaste province, which is an infamous and windy town like those of our own little province, Santiago del Estero.

A jeep took us as far as the road permitted, and from there we started our long walk under quite a strong sun. After more than 10 kilometers, we encountered another jeep, which took us as far as the little town of La Cruz, where we were invited to have lunch. At 2:00 we set off for another 22 kilometers, but by 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. night was falling and one of my feet was a misery to walk on. We slept in a bin used for storing rice and fought all night over the blanket.

The next day, after walking until 3:00 in the afternoon, making a dozen or so detours around a river, we finally reached Peñas Blancas. We had to stay there as no more cars were heading to the neighboring town of Rivas.

The next day dawned to rain and by 10:00 a.m. there was still no sign of a truck, so we decided to brave the drizzle and set off for Rivas anyway. At that moment, Fatty Rojo appeared in a car with Boston University license plates. They were trying to get to Costa Rica, an impossible feat because the muddy track on which we ourselves had been bogged a few times was actually the Panama-Costa Rica highway. Rojo was accompanied by the brothers Domingo and Walter Beberaggi Allende. We went on to Rivas and there, close to the town, we ordered a spit roast with *mate* and *cañita,* a kind of Nicaraguan gin. A little corner of Argentina transplanted to the “Tacho estate.” They continued on to San Juan del Sur, intending to take the car across to Puntarenas, while we took the bus to Managua. [...]

Days pass—eventful and uneventful. I have the firm promise of a job as assistant to a medical worker. I returned my dollar. I visited Obdulio Barthe again, the Paraguayan who told me off for my behavior and confessed he thought I might be an agent for the Argentine embassy. I also discovered that his suspicion, or something along those lines, is widely held, except for the Honduran leader Ventura Ramos, who does not believe it. As the fight with Sra. de Holst continues, I sneak in once a day and sleep in Ñico (the

Cuban's) room, who pisses himself laughing all day but never does anything. Ñico leaves on Monday, so I'll shift rooms to share with a Guatemalan friend called Coca. A Cuban (who sings tangos) sleeps in Ñico's room and has invited me to head south on foot as far as Venezuela. If it wasn't for the job they have promised me, I'd go. They've said they'll give me residency, and Zachrison has now become head of immigration. [...]

Once again the days pass uneventfully. I am at the boarding house, sharing with the Cuban songbird, now that ñico has gone to Mexico. I go day after day looking for this job, but nothing, and now they have told me to leave it for a week, and I'm not really sure what to do. I don't know whether the compañeros are still set on my not getting something or not. Little news arrives from Buenos Aires. Helenita is leaving for an unknown destination and I've stopped looking, but she will take me to her aunt's house, who will give me lunch. She's going to call the minister. I've got a good old attack of asthma, brought on by what I've been eating these last days. I hope I'll recover with a strict, three-day diet. [...]

Recent events belong to history: a feature, I think, appearing in my notes for the first time.

A few days ago, some planes from Honduras crossed the border with Guatemala and flew over the city in broad daylight, shooting at both people and military targets. I joined the public health brigades to work in the medical corps and also the youth brigades that patrol the streets at night. The course of events was as follows: After these planes flew over, troops under the command of Colonel Castillo Armas, a Guatemalan émigré in Honduras, crossed the border and advanced on the town of Chiquimula. The Guatemalan government, although it had already protested to Honduras, let them enter without putting up any resistance and presented the case before the United Nations.

Colombia and Brazil, docile instruments of the Yankees, drew up a plan to hand the matter over to the OAS but this was rejected by the Soviet Union, which favored a cease-fire agreement. The invaders failed in their attempt to get the masses to rise up with the weapons they had dropped from planes, but they did capture the town of Bananera and cut off the Puerto Barrios railway line.

The goal of the mercenaries was clear: to take Puerto Barrios and then ship in various arms and more mercenary troops. This became clear when the schooner *Siesta de Trujillo* was captured as it tried to unload arms in that port. The final attack failed but in the hinterland areas the assailants committed extremely barbarous acts, murdering members of SETUFCO (the union of the United Fruit Company workers and employees) in the cemetery, where hand grenades were thrown at their chests.

The invaders believed they only had to say the word and the people would rise up as one to follow them, and that is why they parachute-dropped weapons, but the people immediately rallied to defend Árbenz. Although the invading troops were blocked and defeated on all fronts until they were pushed back beyond Chiquimula near the Honduran border, the pirate airplanes kept attacking the battlefronts and towns, always coming from bases in Honduras and Nicaragua. Chiquimula was heavily bombed and bombs also fell on Guatemala City, injuring several people and killing a three-year-old little girl.

My own life unfolded as follows: First I reported to the youth brigades of the Alliance where we stayed for several days until the minister of public health [Dr. Carlos Tejedas] sent me to the Maestro Health Center where I am billeted. I volunteered for the front but they wouldn’t even look at me. [...]

Today, Saturday, June 26, the minister came by when I had gone to see Hilda; she gave me hell because I wanted to ask him to send me to the front [...].

All of Guatemala’s admirers have taken a terrible, cold shower. On the night of Sunday, June 28, without prior notice President Árbenz declared his resignation. He publicly accused the fruit company and the United States of being directly behind the bombing and strafing of the civilian population.

An English merchant ship was bombed and sunk in the port of San José, and the bombing continues. Árbenz announced his decision to hand over command to Colonel Carlos Enrique Díaz, explaining that he is motivated by a desire to save the October revolution and to block the United States from marching into this land as masters.

Colonel Díaz said nothing in his speech. The PDR [Revolutionary Democrat Party] and the PRG [Party of the Guatemalan Revolution] both

expressed their agreement, calling on their members to cooperate with the new government. The other two parties, the PRN [Party of the National Revolution] and PGT [Guatemalan Workers Party], said nothing. I fell asleep feeling frustrated about what has come to pass. I had spoken to the Ministry of Public Health and again asked to be sent to the front. Now I don't know what to do. We'll see what today brings.

Two days full of political developments, although they have not involved me much personally. The events: Árbenz stepped down under pressure from a US military mission threatening massive bombing attacks, and a declaration of war from Honduras and Nicaragua, which would have led to the United States becoming involved. Árbenz probably could not have foreseen what would come next. The first day, colonels Sánchez and Elfego Monsón, avowedly anticommunist, pledged their support for Díaz, and their first decree was to outlaw the PGT. The persecution began immediately and the embassies filled with asylum seekers; but the worst came early the next day when Díaz and Sánchez stepped aside, leaving Monsón at the head of the government with the two lieutenant-colonels as his subordinates. Word on the street is that they totally capitulated to Castillo Armas,[6] and martial law was declared as a measure against anyone who might be found bearing any weapons of a prohibited caliber. My personal situation is more or less that I'll be expelled from the little hospital where I am now, probably tomorrow, because I have been renamed "Chebol"[7] and the repression is coming.

Ventura and Amador are seeking asylum, H. stays in his house, Hilda has changed her address, Núñez is at home. The top people in the Guatemalan party are seeking asylum. Word is that Castillo will enter the city tomorrow; I received a beautiful letter that I'll keep safe for my grandchildren.

Several days have passed now without that earlier feverish rhythm. Castillo Armas's victory was total. The junta is made up of Elfego Monzón as president, with Castillo Armas, Cruz, Dubois, and Colonel Mendoza. Within a fortnight they will hold an election within the junta to see who comes out on top — Castillo Armas, of course. There is neither a congress nor a constitution. They shot the judge from Salamás, Rómulo Reyes Flores,[8] after he killed a guard who was trying to trick him. Poor Edelberto

Torres is behind bars, accused of being a communist; who knows what the poor old man's fate will be.

Today, July 3, the "liberator" Castillo Armas entered the city to thunderous applause. I am living in the house of two Salvadoran women who are seeking asylum—one in Chile, the other in Brazil—with a little old woman who is always telling stories about her husband's misdeeds and other interesting matters. The hospital sent me packing and now I'm installed here. [...]

The asylum-seekers' situation has not changed. The novelty has worn off and everything is calm. Helenita left today by plane. The look in the German's eyes gets worse each time I see him. I won't visit him again except to pick up some things and my books.

Some fairly serious things have happened, although not in the political arena, where the only change is that illiterates have been disqualified from voting. This is a country where 65 percent of the adult population is illiterate, reducing the number who can vote to 35 percent. Of this 35, perhaps 15 support the regime. The level of fraud, therefore, does not have to be so extreme for the likely "people's candidate," Carlos Castillo Armas, to be elected. Unfortunately, I had to leave the house I had been living in, now that Yolanda, the other sister of the two women hoping for asylum, is here and is planning to move to San Salvador. I'll see if I can go to Helenita's aunt's house.

Now I'm settled in the new house. I keep going to the Argentine embassy, although today it was closed. Nevertheless, because today was July 9 [Argentina's national day], I managed to get in this evening. There is a new ambassador, Torres Gispena, a stocky little pedant from Córdoba. I wolfed down a few things, but there wasn't much to eat. What a guy has to put up with! I met some interesting people at the embassy. One of them, Aguiluz, has written a book on land reform; another, Dr. Díaz, is a Salvadoran pediatrician and a friend of Romero's from Costa Rica.

Asthma is fucking with me after what I ate at the embassy. Otherwise nothing much has changed. I got a letter and a photo from my old lady, and a letter from Celia and Tita Infante [...].

Cheché [José Manuel Vega] must have been granted asylum in the last few hours. We agreed he would present himself at the embassy at 6:30 p.m.

My plans are very fluid, but it’s most likely I’ll go to Mexico—although it’s within the realm of possibility that I might try my luck in Belize. [...]

Mexico

The following day (or rather, that same evening) we set off for Veracruz aboard the *Ana Graciela*, a little, 150-ton motor boat. The first day went well, but on the next a big northerly blew up and had us flying all over the place. We rested a day in Veracruz and then set off for Mexico City via Córdova, stopping there for an hour to look around. It’s no big deal, but still a very pleasant town, more than 800 meters above sea level, with a breeze that is refreshing in the tropical climate, and coffee fields in abundance. The nearby town of Orizaba is much more like the Andes: grim and cold. The Blanco River lies just beyond town, as if it were an extension of the town. It was the site of a historic massacre of workers protesting against their exploitation by a Yankee company. I don’t remember the year.

Only two important events. One shows that I am getting old: a girl whose thesis I helped edit included me in the list of those who had helped her (it’s customary here to dedicate your thesis to half the world) and I felt pretty happy. The other was a beautiful experience. I went to Iztacihualt, Mexico’s third largest volcano; it was quite a long way, and the journey’s novelty value was in the fact that some were traveling on horseback. At first I managed to keep up with the best, but at one point I stopped for five minutes to treat a blister and when I got going again I had to race to catch up with the rest of the column. I did so, but was really feeling it, and in the end I began to tire. Then I had the luck to meet a girl who could go no further, and on the pretext of helping her (she was on horseback), I went along dangling from the stirrup. We eventually reached the tents where we were to spend the night; I got totally frozen and couldn’t sleep. When we had arrived the ground was dry, but when we got up the next day there were 30 or 40 centimeters of snow and it was still snowing. We decided to keep going anyway, but we never even made it to the shoulder of the volcano and by 11:00 a.m. we were on our way back.

The road that had been dusty and rocky on the way up was now covered with snow. Suffering poor circulation in my feet, I was wearing five pairs of socks, and was barely able to walk. A muleteer with a loaded mule passed

by me with bare feet, which really gave me a complex. When we reached the woods the scenery was so beautiful, for the snow in the pine trees was quite a magnificent sight and the falling snow further enhanced the beauty. I arrived home exhausted.

Once again to Iztacihualt, after a number of failures. This time it happened thus: At dawn, nine of us arrived at the foot of the slope and began to climb along the edge of La Gubia towards the Ago shelter, crazy to straighten our knees. When we hit the snow, two turned back. I remained in the last group and as we tackled the glacier and saw it was pure ice, the guy accompanying me turned back. I was therefore by myself when I fell, ending up in the ice clutching a shoulder. The fall made me more cautious and I continued very slowly. The guide tried to encourage me by showing me how to climb, but then he fell down. He flew past me like a ball, desperately trying to drive his axe into the ice, and after some 80 meters he did finally come to a stop, close to a precipice from which there was a great leap into the shit. After the guide's thumping crash, we descended very carefully, discovering that it takes longer to go down than up. The guide was exhausted and kept wandering away from the downward path, so it was 6:00 p.m. by the time we reached the foot of the slope.

A long time has passed and there have been many events not yet recounted. I'll just note the most important one. Since February 15, 1956, I'm a father: Hilda Beatriz Guevara is my firstborn.

I belong to the Roca del CE group of Mexico.

Five jobs I was offered all fell through, so I signed up as a cameraman in a small company and my progress in cinematography has been rapid. My plans for the future are unclear but I hope to finish a couple of research projects. This could be an important year for my future. I've already given up hospitals. I'll write soon with more details.[9]

---

1. Carlos Ferrer was a childhood friend from Córdoba, Argentina.
2. Isaías Nougués was an exiled Argentine opponent of Perón.
3. After the 1952 revolution in Bolivia, President Victor Paz Estenssoro instituted many progressive reforms, including the nationalization of the largest tin mines and land reform.
4. The article titled, "Experimento extraordinario es el que se realiza en Bolivia," was published in *El Diario de Costa Rica* on December 11, 1953.

5. Carlos Prío Socarras was president of Cuba and Pepe Figueres was president of Costa Rica.
6. After the coup against Árbenz, Castillo Armas began a fierce wave of repression that continued until 1957 when he was assassinated.
7. A play on the words “Bolshie” (Bolshevik) and “Che.”
8. This turned out to be false information.
9. This is the last entry in Che Guevara’s diary as he left Mexico on November 25, 1956, on board the *Granma*, along with Fidel Castro and the other Cuban revolutionaries, to initiate the struggle to overthrow the Batista dictatorship.

Doctors and Their Environment

This unpublished text is a rough draft of an unfinished manuscript, *The Role of the Doctor in Latin America*, of which only a few paragraphs were written between 1954 and 1956. Che began work on this book in Guatemala (see his letter dated February 12, 1954), and continued sporadically during his time in Mexico. Despite being a rough draft, this document has great value, presenting Che's views on social medicine, and shows how advanced his positions were. The bibliography he consulted is also important because of its breadth and heterogeneity.

The Role of the Doctor in Latin America

When initiating the struggle for the people's health, as a first step doctors should investigate what possibilities already exist in their complex surroundings. Earlier analyses have shown that facilities vary in different regions, countries, social classes and ethnic groups, and doctors must respond accordingly.

The struggle should always be expressed within a general framework that guarantees success and that leads doctors to win first the confidence and then the affection of those for whom they are medically responsible. Even though the problem can only be outlined in general terms, it should be noted that a doctor's first weapon is flexibility. Flexibility—without any very obvious probing—will allow a doctor to gain the respect of the population generally. Naturally, the conditions of struggle will vary greatly, but doctors should always take this first step along the path of consolidation.

One of the first pitfalls to be avoided is offered by colleagues and others in related professions—in small towns, a rival doctor or the pharmacist; in larger towns, a variety of colleagues and specialists. In any case, the first skirmish will always be waged on the monetary front. After a doctor has

demonstrated that he is absolutely impregnable to bribes, he will be subjected to harsher attacks. Good use should be made of this period between armed neutrality and open warfare. Later, war should be waged not only against the commercial disgraces of the profession but also against deficiencies of other kinds.

The struggle to obtain better working conditions for workers and adequate medical attention will easily lead doctors to clash with the established authorities in the sector, who are always lickspittles responding to the orders of those who hold the purse strings in the area, and with whom the authorities are sometimes confused. All activities should be carried out taking into account local public opinion supporting the popular cause that is being defended; this is where doctors should use their abilities as psychologists to the utmost—above all, in those places where the struggle must be waged directly against capital, without the help of any labor laws. Strikes are very hard to organize, unless the pretext is of such seriousness that it is understood even by those with a low level of consciousness, which is the case among the masses of workers in our continent. In general, one must be very careful not to be labeled a strike doctor, because that can finish off a professional's reputation in some places.

If it is not possible to remain entirely on the sidelines, the doctor's general role will be to provide an ideological orientation, without indicating any apparent interest in the popular movement itself. Small towns contain elements that cannot be underestimated. Public opinion is much more important in such places than in the cities, and doctors should always have anecdotes to draw on to highlight the poor working and living conditions of the people they defend.

To draw up a general outline of how to conduct oneself, one must enter the battlefield armed with a good basic knowledge [of the locality]. This includes the birth rate; the infant, prenatal and general mortality rates... and, assisted by other data, the general morbidity. In cases in which there are no death or other records—which means most places in Latin America—it is a good idea to visit the local people's homes so as to gradually learn about their domestic situation.

The general picture of diseases will give you an idea of the main problems to be solved. Later, I'll go into the need for the doctor to get the inhabitants to take an active part in health care, but it can always be said

that epidemic diseases—and especially endemic ones—can be combated by making correct use of the general public health system, helped by a precise understanding of the problem, explained by the doctor.

One of the doctor's most successful—though always dangerous—methods is to create health cooperatives. They are always a double-edged sword, and are usually promptly taken over by the "ladies" of the town and by other people who, in general, tend to stifle the normal development of health care. However, in those places where cooperatives must be created, this is easy to do if there is nothing else, as they will always be a step forward. Right now, to avoid being smeared as "red"—a charge which would be immediately extended to the doctor—it is not necessary to insist on having workers and peasants represented in the charitable societies, but it is important that, using a lot of common sense, the doctor start raising consciousness among the needy classes, making them aware of what an important role health care plays in problems of daily life.

Medically, it is essential to stress how important nutrition is in all the most common endemic diseases. Correct nutritional treatment and its corresponding success will draw attention to its importance. Doctors should remember that, in the present conditions, economic worries are primary, followed (as a complement to the former) by health care and then education.

Someone who eats well will be immediately concerned about their health care, and when that is improved—which will be a real achievement in unhealthy, marginalized communities—will then worry about the next problem: their education and that of their families.

With regard to this last aspect, while doctors should play an important counseling role, it is not a good idea for them to be in the foreground—especially in studies the nature of which will inevitably lead them to clash with the ideology of the ruling classes.

In places with deeply rooted religious traditions, one must also be careful there—at least until those who are best placed to offer systematic opposition to doctors have been neutralized.

In terms of public health, it should always be remembered that children should receive the best possible treatment. Always try to achieve success through collective action by the community rather than from the individual effort of the doctor.

The problems of individual health care are not so much the concern of the revolutionary doctor as collective health care. In terms of preventative health care, in addition to the measures that should be taken in each individual case, in accord with the established rules and regulations, doctors can set up systems for seeking and isolating diseases in the areas where they are found. When attempting to do this in an important community, Dr. Germinal Rodríguez's book *Higiene y Profilaxis* [Health and Prophylaxis] offers a good model.

It makes for a quite pretentious office, but the doctor needs a secretary, a lab assistant, two social workers and some volunteers in order to do this effectively. In addition to the invaluable health service it offers, a clinic of this kind also has the virtue of winning over the inhabitants to the idea of exercising their rights as citizens—which, when they get used to it, will lead many "lone wolves" to rejoin the community.

One of the points to which doctors should pay close attention is that of ensuring the government's neutrality, if nothing else. There is an apparently wide range of systems of government in Latin America, but nearly all of them share the common denominator of colonialism. This encapsulates the tragedy of the human communities now living in Latin America and has certain general features:

- control by large landowners,
- powerful authorities who oppose the people,
- control by the clergy,
- an absence of effective social laws and
- the predominance of foreign monopoly corporations.

In this panorama, with the authorities as the direct representatives of the upper social classes, doctors have to take things very slowly in order to keep the government neutral or win it over. Therefore, they should fulfill their obligations to the higher health authorities, while at the same time demanding that those authorities provide as many resources as possible. They must wage virtually a personal struggle against the exploiters,

separate from the central bureaucracy, while ensuring that their medical-social activities are not seen as part of the political struggle.

It seems hardly necessary to emphasize that the doctors' work should be carried out with complete dedication, for this is what will make their ideas triumph over the inconsistent, mercenary activities of their individualistic colleagues, who view their role only as a means toward their desired goals — whether this is power (the relative power wielded by the doctor in a village), fame or money. Revolutionary doctors should always remember that it is their duty to attack whatever problems adversely affect the people, who are the only ones they should serve.

- Need for study.

- Need for exchanges with medical journals.

Works Consulted (1954-56) for *The Role of the Doctor in Latin America*

Adams, Richard N., *Un análisis de las creencias y prácticas médicas en un pueblo indígena de Guatemala (Con sugerencias relacionadas con la práctica de medicina en el área maya)* [An Analysis of Medical Practices and Beliefs in an Indigenous Village in Guatemala (With Suggestions Related to the Practice of Medicine in the Mayan Area)]. Special publication 17 of the National Indigenous Institute, Guatemala: Editorial del Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1952. (C.).

Constitución (ley fundamental) de la U.R.S.S. [Constitution of the USSR] (Moscow: Ediciones en lenguas extranjeras, 1947) (C.).

Heiser, Víctor, *La Odisea de un médico por 45 países* [A Doctor's Odyssey through 45 Countries], Buenos Aires: Editor Juaquín Gil, 1938.

Lipschutz, Alejandro, *El indoamericanismo y el problema racial en las Américas* [Indo-Americanism and the Racial Problem in the Americas], Santiago, Chile: Editorial Nascimento, 1944, (c.) (I.).

Rodríguez, Germinal, *Higiene y Profilaxis* [Health and Prophylaxis], Buenos Aires: Editorial Américalee, 1944.

Troise, Emilio, *Materialismo dialéctico* [Dialectical Materialism], Buenos Aires: Editorial la Facultad, 1938.

Vinogradov, N., *La protección de la salud de los trabajadores en le Unión Soviética* [Protection of Workers' Health in the Soviet Union], Moscow: Ediciones en lenguas extranjeras, 1950.

Important Works for *The Role of the Doctor in Latin America*

Cottevieille-Giraudet, R., "Questions de raciologie humaine," in *Revue Antropologique,* Paris, No. 46, 1937.

Gauze, G.F., *The Struggle for Existence,* Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Co., 1934.

Malaria and Its Influence in World Health, New York: New York Academy of Medicine, 1943, Vol. 19, p. 599.

Mason, J.A., *Idiomas indígenas y su estudio* [Indigenous Languages and Their Study], Mexico City: América indígena, 1943, Vol. 3, p. 231.

Newman, H.H., *Twins, a Study in Heredity and Environment,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937.

Poblete Troncoso, M., *El standard de vida de las poblaciones de América* [The Standard of Living of Different Populations in the Americas], Santiago, Chile: Prensas de la Universidad de Chile, 1942.

Redfield, R., *Levels of Integration in Biological and Social Systems,* Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Jacques Cattell Press, 1942.

Reading Notes

The following are Ernesto Guevara's comments about books that he read, mainly during his stay in Mexico (1954–56), although these notes have no dates. They show the breadth of his literary interests and the rigor and depth of his reading. Neruda's *Canto General*, which he considered "the best book in all of Latin America," was particularly influential and would be a particular favorite throughout his life.

Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España

[True History of the Conquest of New Spain]

by Bernal Díaz del Castillo[1]

In Latin American literature, there is a primitive connection with old Spain, consisting of those Spaniards who were writing from these lands. The extraordinary history by Bernal Díaz is one of these.

Bernal Díaz is Spanish, but the heart of his chronicle is about the conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés and his army, an adventure that approaches the conceivable limits of human daring and that, on the lips of the chronicler, becomes something truly alive.

This is both the most important and the most literary aspect of his work; its worth is as a personal testimony. The history related is not as important as how an intelligent soldier, with no other claim to culture, has set down his memories of the heroic era of imperial Spain and that Cortés, Sandoval, Alvarado and Cristóbal de Olid are described in their true, extraordinary—and human—dimensions.

Bernal Díaz has not set himself the task of investigating whether or not the conquest had any religious justification, as did his more erudite contemporary Cieza de León, and he often compares his compatriots unfavorably with the Incas. For Díaz, the action had the primary

justification that he was part of it—or, rather, that he was a member of the attacking army.

Bernal never tried to depict nor could he have depicted the Indians' spirit, but he has presented the most extraordinary historical picture of the conquistadors.

His colorful prose, which is both antiquated and fresh, presents the central figure of this drama (from the invaders' point of view): the intrepid, elusive, clever, intriguing, mellifluous and embittered Captain Hernán Cortés. He depicts the captain's character and his grandeur—grandeur felt not only by his racial enemies but also by his Spanish friends and enemies — much better than any hagiography has done.

When Bernal narrates his horror at the deep, low sound of the horns with which the Aztecs announced the sacrifice of captured Spaniards, the reader is transported to the state of mind of those uncultured soldiers, who were convinced of their god's superiority over the bloody Huitzilobos, but whose faith faltered when they felt the imagined bite of the Aztec warriors on their arms and legs and knew what fate had in store for them. Close to a thousand of their compañeros in the small troop had already passed through the stomachs of the enemy army. Nevertheless, seeing no alternative, they kept on fighting until they became masters over the natives. And then came the sad part, the squabbles over money, Indians and glory. That heroic and pointless expedition to Higueras and the meaningless, stupid death of the Emperor Cuauhtémoc, who had been conquered both morally and physically, because of the torture to which Cortés subjected him in his search for gold. He was executed more to calm his captors' inner anger than to put down a revolt that, by then, was no longer possible.

---

1. Bernal Dìaz del Castillo (1492-1585) was a Spanish conquistador, who wrote an eyewitness account of the conquest of Mexico for Hernán Cortés. His manuscript was only published in 1632, some decades after his death.

La crónica del Perú [The Chronicle of Peru]

by Pedro Cieza de León[1]

This is the first part of a monumental work written about everything that happened in Peru from its inhabitants' earliest memories up to the time Cieza de León sat down to write. [In] the prologue, speaking of the four parts of the work, he says:

"This first part is about marking the boundaries of Peru's provinces, both at sea and on land, with longitude and latitude; a description of them all; the founding of new cities by the Spaniards; who the founders were; when they were settled; the Indians' ancient rites and customs; and other strange things that are very different from ours and are worth noting.

"The next three parts are on the rule of the Incas, the war of conquest and the civil wars."

In view of so many insubstantial, false accounts, the fairness and veracity of the data given by Cieza—who never cited anything if he was not sure of his facts, either because he himself knew them to be true or because they were attested to by some authoritative person, to whom he sometimes gave written testimony—are amazing.

This part, the least interesting one in his account, nevertheless gives a precise idea of the historic setting in which he acted, and, although he defends the religious need for the conquest, he passes harsh judgment on the Spaniards who were guilty of mistreating the Indians. He absolves the Indians of their sins because the light of Christianity was, as yet, unknown to them.

The most amazing thing about Cieza's work is Cieza himself. This strange product of humanity was much less interested in gold and the feats of war than in the moral character of the conquerors and the conquered,

who appeared in a setting in which the conquistadors, in their thirst for gold, were destroying everyone and everything in their path.

---

1. Pedro Cieza de León (1520-54) was a Spanish soldier, who chronicled the conquest of Peru.

La Araucana [The Araucanian Maiden]

by Alonso de Ercilla[1]

The first epic poem of the Americas. The first great American poem. These are the broad distinctive characteristics of *La araucana* [The Araucanian Maiden], but it is a work that eludes the diagnostic precision of the critics. It breathes double nuances that are matched only in Bernal's naive prose: the author's admiration for both sides. This allows him to sing the praises of both the enormous courage of the Spanish invaders and the perseverance and intelligence with which Lautaro's hosts defended themselves against their attackers.

The work is too long for all of it to be good, but Antonio de Undurraga has made a beautiful synthesis of the poem. It is amazing to think that the soldier was a contemporary of Cervantes and Lope de Vega. Truly, such a good poet should be an unchallenged Latin American classic. Right from the beginning of the poem:

> Chile, distinguished and fertile
> province in the famed Antarctic region...

up to the last verse, Ercilla holds your interest. What he writes is not always poetry—sometimes, it is simply an account—but his hendecasyllabic verse always shows considerable technical perfection combined with a complete naturalness that makes the poem flow like a steady stream.

The people's interests are a constant underlying theme in the poem. The masses are the actors in history; names are accidents of that mass. During the struggle for power, Colocolo says:

> Oh, Araucanians, when will end

the rage that leads you all to hell?
You fight your relative and friend
but ’gainst the tyrant don’t rebel.

His admonition has an effect; carrying a tree trunk on one’s shoulders is taken as the test for aspiring to leadership. Caupolicán is the victor, and the spectators pronounce sentence, saying:

“On the shoulders of such strong men
we place our obligations, then.”

The ruthless struggle continues until Valdivia falls into the hands of those defending their land.

There are no heroic scenes, theatrical words or anything like that. Valdivia wants to save his life and humbles himself before the victor:

Caupolicán, glad he’s not dead
— and is reduced to this condition—
with victor’s voice and high-held head
threatens him with inquisition.
Valdivia the captive’s led
to humble pie and to petition
for his life. He says he’ll cease
to fight and leave the land in peace.

Throughout the poem, Ercilla shows respect for the opponents, recognizing in Lautaro a true war leader:

Lautaro was wise, industrious and sure,
a man with good advice, of gentle mien
and medium height whose refined gesture
lent authority such is seldom seen.

And when Lautaro dies—betrayed by an Indian and caught off guard while making love—Ercilla’s laments reach a peak; it seems that he does not want

his side to win:

> O, cruel fate! On the left side
> the point flies straight to wrest
> the most courageous heart that I'd
> e'er met, from out his breast.

The Indians die around their chief, refusing to accept honorable surrender or quarter of any kind, and Ercilla narrates the death of his indigenous heroes with sorrow against the backdrop of the Spanish scourge, a pretext for emphasizing the indomitable courage of the conquered race. Ercilla knows that the Spaniards will win; he knows that, one day, the entire region will belong to the hosts of the kings and queens of Castile; but the final stanza hints at a subtle melancholy when, describing Chile, he says:

> See the stains of earth so covered
> that in secret they are kept.
> They will never be discovered;
> here, foreigners will never step...
> until God decides to let them show
> so their secret, thus, will grow.

---

1. Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga (1533–94) was a Spanish nobleman, soldier and poet. His epic poem *La Araucana* describes the courageous resistance of the indigenous Mapuche people to the Spanish conquest of Chile.

Facundo (Civilización o barbarie) [Facundo (Civilization or Barbarism)]

by Domingo F. Sarmiento[1]

Sarmiento is one of those meteors that shoot across a people's horizon every so often, only to be lost in a turn in the road, but always leaving the memory of their brilliance. In his historical work, his love for the people's education should be remembered; in his political work, there is the handing over of Argentina to the imperialist voracity of the railroads; in his literary work, *Facundo* will ensure his name lives on even after everything else has been forgotten.

He tried to make *Facundo* historical and dispassionate, cold as an account of bygone times, but it is just the opposite; it is such a vigorous, anecdotal, impassioned and exciting account that it makes for a timely document even today. History is the framework in which the novelist Sarmiento moves his very lifelike characters: Facundo, the savage with a certain nobility, the prototype of the pampas and the "barbarism" that Sarmiento censures; and Rosas, the cold and intelligent despot, whom Sarmiento astutely interprets as a product of the great cattle-raising latifundios; but above his characters he places the most important actor—the pampas, with all its barbaric grandeur.

In the first part of the work, Sarmiento presents a brief description of the pampas, a sketch the poetic depth and penetration of which has only been surpassed by Hernández.

The whole second part is dedicated to the life and death of Facundo Quiroga, up to the tragedy of Barranca-Yaco. Sarmiento takes it for granted that Rosas was responsible for his death—a hypothesis that has been repeated systematically throughout history, but for which there is no

conclusive proof, though it is true that Facundo was a rival to be feared and the tyrant was the direct beneficiary of his death.

In the third part, Sarmiento takes a look at the future, when the nightmare will have ended.

The almost fantastic grandeur of the entire epic is further enhanced by Sarmiento's correct analysis of the events that he experienced. (Sarmiento shows that he has read Guizot and has interpreted his theory of the class struggle.) Truly, Sarmiento was a genius, and *Facundo* proves it.

---

1. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-88) was a prominent Argentine intellectual and president (1868-74). His greatest literary creation, *Facundo,* is a work of creative non-fiction and a scathing critique of the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas.

El Evangelio y el Syllabus y Un dualismo imposible
[The Gospel and the Syllabus and an Impossible Dualism]

by Dr. Lorenzo Montúfar[1]

This work, consisting of two tracts, serves as a magnificent means for measuring how much progress humanity has made. At the end of the 1800s, the period in which the tracts were written, they were a terrible anathema against the church, and it took courage to write them.

The standard-bearer and guide, the Antichrist, was the United States, the symbol of liberalism. In the first tract, Dr. Montúfar analyzes in detail the Syllabus issued by Pius IX and shows its falsity from the primitive Christian point of view. In the second, he advocates a separation of church and state as the only valid solution for the problem of the two coexisting powers.

The charming, lively work makes us smile today, but, in its time, it must have caused quite an uproar. It is dedicated to Montalvo, who had seen García Moreno fall in Ecuador.

The final analysis shows that no government that is based on a religion gives its citizens freedom of belief. The author analyzes several kinds of relationships between church and state and comes down heavily on the side of the one adopted in the United States.

---

1. Lorenzo Montúfar y Rivera (1823–98) was a Guatemalan politician and lawyer, who wrote a history of Central America.

Martín Fierro

by José Hernández[1]

There are so many and such exhaustive commentaries on classical works that it is often very difficult to add anything, especially in this case, in which the author's unacknowledged intention was his dispute with Sarmiento—who, at that time, represented the most progressive part of Argentine society. The poem's social intent is worthy, as it gives a good description of the life and ill-treatment of the gauchos, but, basically, there is not much more to it than that.

Martín Fierro achieves its lasting value because of the sustained, realistic tone of the poem, which paints a general panorama of the era in bright colors, and because of the true picture it gives of the characters through their words. It achieves poetic value in only a few exceptional passages, but some of those phrases and sentences are well worth inclusion in anthologies.

The deserved fame of the passage about old Vizcacha is due to the perfect synchronization of the gaucho's speech with the quaintness employed by the masses in every country. The Argentine Sancho Panza is much more alert and consciously lively than his famous predecessor, and there are some verses that are rather coarse, such as:

> If the oven's to be heated,
> let the baker go and try.
> I won't bestir myself. Know why?
> I take a lesson from the pig,
> who eats its young and grows so big:
> I work for me, myself and I.

And also:

> Don’t suffer, even if the world
> falls down around your feet.
> The first thing you must do to beat
> the odds is to discover who
> provides the meals that come to you.
> Protect this source, and you can eat.

But while old Vizcacha is convincingly depicted, Fierro and Cruz are less so, and their sons are weaker characters. Moreover, there is something jarring here, for the author states that 10 years have gone by, while the story gives the impression that it was much longer.

When the novel ceases to be a novel and becomes true poetry, the tailcoat that Calixto Oyuela mentioned when criticizing the work appears many times, but my main criticism is that it is too subjective; I don’t think that a gaucho would investigate his impulses like that, even though the author’s rigorous analysis has broken down the vocabulary perfectly.

> I don’t know what occurred
> within my thoughts just then.
> The proud Indian again
> with all his hatred stirred,
> shot me a look. Enough: no word would
> pierce so far in men.

But, in any case, these poetic nuances, which fall intermittently on the popular aspects, help to solidify the book.

In the two parts there is a clear allusion to two different periods: of Sarmiento, the scorned man of the people, who denied everything related to gauchos, and Avellaneda, the man of culture, who paid homage to the substratum of Argentine society living on the pampas.

The most false note struck by the book is the moment in which Fierro sums up his feats and apologizes for them in the same way that José Hernández— but not the protagonist—would. Time and the political

situation have made Hernández-Fierro, now an old man, forget the anguished cry of rebellion:

> He has no sons or wife,
> no sponsor and no friend.
> No one will him defend;
> all are his masters now.
> So, like the ox, he'll bow,
> accept his fate—and plow.

To conclude, in such straitened circumstances:

> For him who must live so,
> his torment never ceases
> but with his pride increases.
> By doing as he should,
> he'll make his master good.
> If not, he'll fall to pieces.

Fierro's tragic rebellion has been polished and turned into restrained advice for his sons and for Cruz's son. He recognizes that gauchos have unenviable lives, and, at the end, he says:

> The eagle has its nest;
> for the tiger, a jungle waits;
> the fox has cave and mates.
> Only gauchos have no home
> and, to live, must roam
> with most uncertain fates.

And he recommends:

> The poor man is what's left
> when bad luck fortune blights,
> and no one really fights

to defend him and his spouse.
A gaucho should have house,
and school and church and rights.

In the last verse of the poem, he apologizes to anyone whom his attacks may have offended:

The memory's a virtue,
a skill among the first.
All those who think I've cursed
them here should think again:
though painting living men,
I've left out all the worst.

In any case, Hernández achieves his objective of describing the gauchos' way of life in the feudal society that tyrannized them and of depicting the desert, its courageous Indians and the struggle for survival.

Perhaps, if Sarmiento had governed in the second period, that change wouldn't have occurred.

(first part)

I know the chiefs protect
the Christians over there
and terms of "brother" share
when they do pleasing things.
Take what the future brings.
Why should we dwell on care?

(second part)

Charitable Indians?
Go find some, if you will.
Their prisoners fare ill
from treatment most unjust.
They're sly; filled with distrust;

though brave, revengeful still.

However, it should not be forgotten that Fierro's original exclamation, calling his friend Cruz to the desert, was the fruit of anguish over past misfortunes, while the second was after he had had his experiences in the desert. In any case, Roca's barbarous campaign was fast approaching, and preparations had to be made.

Fierro gave a sad but colorful account of the desert and his life there, filled with urbane observations about the king of the desert, man and his resources...

> The birds and beasts and fish
> survive in a thousand ways;
> but man, who on the others preys
> and eats them all just to supply
> his wants, can cry—
> and, thus, true sentiment betrays.

Martín Fierro blunders through this second verse and winds up his song in the improvisation competition against the black man with some advice to his children. With the advice, he throws in the towel. Man should be honest, good, a hard worker, etc.—not rebellious. Fierro is old and resigned, but one wonders: in their day-to-day lives, didn't the gauchos aspire to the same goals as Fierro? If so, the part of the poem that is most open to criticism is redeemed, and, in addition to the argument for poems about gauchos, *Martín Fierro* would be an artistic instrument of protest in the deliberate defense of a defeated class.

---

1. José Hernández (1834-86) was an Argentine politician, journalist and poet, best known for his epic poem, *Martin Fierro,* about the life of the Argentine *gaucho.*

Obras escogidas [Selected Works]

by Enrique Gómez Carrillo[1]

Professor Edelberto Torres has made an excellent selection. Above all, the first article, “Evocación de Guatemala” [Evocation of Guatemala], is like a portrait of the future. Its pages exude an exhausted charm, such as arose from the stagnant atmosphere of his old aunt’s living room, and this is the impression left by Gómez Carrillo’s prose.

It is a great lesson. Only the cries of the people’s souls went down in posterity—the vigorous cries of Rubén Darío and Pablo Neruda. The harmonious, rhythmic, light voice of the great chronicler enchanted the readers of his time and probably made him more famous than the powerful men of his generation. But then came death and with it oblivion.

The lyrical aspect of his prose now seems to be summed up in the too glossy portrait of his aunt when she was young, in the aforementioned living room.

A subtle dust rises from his prose that, when stirred, contains miracles of time cushioned in a gentle, drowsy boredom.

This work should be read when one is feeling nostalgic—if possible, while sitting by the fireside warmed by a good blaze while the rain beats down outside, just before going to bed...

---

1. Enrique Gómez Carrillo (1873–1927) was a Guatemalan writer, literary critic and diplomat, best known for his chronicles, which were characterized by modernist prose.

Martí: Raíz y ala del libertador de Cuba

[Martí: Roots and Wings of the Cuban Liberator]

by Vicente Sáenz[1]

This is a small portrait of the liberator, with heavy quotations, giving an idea of the clear and elegant thought of the revolutionary poet.

One could not say it is a masterpiece, but that is not its function either. Simply, the author is overwhelmed by Martí's words, which are sufficient in themselves to clarify the concepts discussed. The author limits himself to ordering them more or less chronologically, up to the time of Martí's death.

If the booklet has something to offer, it is the final comparison with certain run-of-the-mill contemporary politicians.

To describe Rómulo Betancourt or Haya de la Torre as equals of Martí is an insult to the man who lived in the belly of the beast and knew its entrails, though they were not nearly as black and pestilent then as they are now. The book would be much better without this final invocation.

---

1. Costa Rican Vicente Saenz's biography of Cuban independence leader José Martí was published in 1953.

Breve historia de México [Brief History of Mexico]

by José Vasconcelos[1]

Seldom has an internationally renowned man so deeply and hypocritically betrayed everything he had said he was fighting for at one time in his career.

The *Breve historia...* is anything but history. Rather, it is an avalanche of insults against everything indigenous. It assumes an all-encompassing attitude that conceals its meek submission to foreigners in supposed hatred of them.

The author sets out from the supposition that the Aztecs were a nation of idolatrous barbarians and that God did well in punishing them but, merciful in the end, sent them the finest, bravest, best and wisest conquistadors in the world—the Spaniards—whose chief, Cortés, was the archetype of those qualities.

All the problems that arose later on stemmed from two basic sins: the betrayal of mother Spain (by becoming independent of her) and the persecution of Catholicism (the only true religion).

Vasconcelos chooses concepts of Spengler's (and not that philosopher's most original ones) to apply his concepts of the superior man to the Spanish model.

The work is anti-historical because it is polemical and does not always tell the truth. Most especially, it contains such nonsense as that of supporting Maximiliano against Juárez (who Vasconcelos considered a representative of foreigners). Moreover, it is nasty and antinationalistic. It is the product of a narcissistic, resentful mentality that disguises its personal failure in a hatred of the growing greatness of isolated individuals. Its underlying theses are many years out of date, and they are presented in a ridiculous way.

In short, it is a work that defines its author as a traitor, a resentful person in love with himself and a shallow philosopher in what must be recognized as his civic bravery in denouncing the economic abuses of the hierarchs of the Mexican revolution.

---

1. José Vasconcelos was a major figure in the Mexican revolution of 1910 and Mexico's first minister of education.

Trayectoria de Goethe [History of Goethe]

by Alfonso Reyes[1]

Here, one of the purest Latin American souls approaches the work of one of the greatest talents of humankind. And the approach, though not irreverent, is not made on his knees. Reyes looks back coolly at his Germanic model over the century and a half that has passed since Goethe's time and points out the defects in his character—defects that were particularly lamentable in his indulgence of the powerful, to whom Goethe the adviser always submitted his apparently enlightening opinion.

The book guides us through several emotional stages, ending with "the last peaks," after which, following his long and serene life, the poet entered immortality. The work is a good beginning for learning, with intelligent guidance, about Goethe, the teacher of teachers, the poet, painter, scientist and statesman, whose many-sided genius was crystallized in *Faust.*

---

1. Alfonso Reyes (1889–1959) was a leading Mexican humanist. His book on Goethe was first published in 1954.

La rebelión de los colgados
[The Rebellion of the Hanged]

by Bruno Traven[1]

Bruno Traven is a strange character about whom not even his editors know much. It seems that he writes in English and is a foreigner. I'm commenting on him because of the contribution that his books of adventures have made to Latin American popular novels.

[The Rebellion of the Hanged] is a bit of historical and social reality placed in the framework of unreal characters—unreal because their language and psychology are strange for Indians.

It is obvious that the author is either alien to Mexico or alien to the social class he is describing, but his sympathy for the oppressed is clear, and he does not bother to hide it. The final chapters are more of a revolutionary statement (with many anarchistic details) than a novel.

The action takes place on a ranch in southern Mexico in the period just before the revolution of 1910. The workers were terribly oppressed, and each of the three brothers who owned the ranch tried to outdo the others in terms of brutality. Finally, the workers rebelled and used their machetes to kill first one of the brothers and then the other two and all of the overseers. The book's title comes from the owners' custom of hanging the workers who didn't fulfill their daily quota by their hands, feet and even testicles.

At the beginning of the rebellion, the lives of the less important employees were respected, but at one point, after workers who had deserted and lived for months hiding out in the wilderness returned and were assigned guard duty, these workers quickly killed men, women and children.

Then the column set out for more heavily populated areas, and that is where the book ends.

It can hardly be called a novel, since the portrayal of individual characters is very weak, but the general actions of the rebellious masses are depicted brilliantly, and the general picture of the arbitrary actions of the owners, which are well known by anyone who has explored Latin America, is precise.

---

1. B. Traven (1882-1969) was the pen name of a writer who lived most of his life in Mexico.

Biografia del Caribe [Biography of the Caribbean]

by Germán Arciniegas[1]

The Caribbean is a neuralgic area in Latin America today and has also been one in the past. It was the place where the most powerful bands of pirates—both Drake's freebooters and those of the United Fruit Company—had their headquarters.

This is a historical parallel, the essence of which the author does not try to explain. For him, the entire Caribbean is developing in accordance with inexplicable laws and passing from one set of hands to another in interminable wars in response to the greed of various monarchs.

Economics, the leitmotiv on which the history of the Caribbean countries turns, is diluted with unimportant ironies, with anecdotal demonstrations of a very profound culture and with lively, well-handled Spanish.

The historical sequence is shown by the appearance of a naval power that replaces another naval or land power that is in decline, and, though the catastrophe of the period—the terrible threat posed by US imperialism— is mentioned on occasion, this is done with affected, tangential phrases, referring only to things that are already almost part of history, such as the seizure of the Panama Canal.

The author has phrases of courteous compliance for the adventurer who, acting as a plenipotentiary, forced the government of Panama at pistol-point to sign a contemptible agreement, and, though he emphasizes Theodore Roosevelt's gangster-like acts, his fine, contemptuous and gentlemanly sarcasm disappears when it comes to those who chopped up his homeland.

Arciniegas had the intelligence and, above all, the culture for writing a great work on the subject, but he failed to do so because he placed his knowledge only at the service of himself.

1. Germán Arciniegas (1900–99) was a Colombian essayist and historian.

Mamita Yunai

by Carlos Luis Fallas[1]

This book was written by a worker as his entry in the competition for best Latin American novel of 1940. The Costa Rican jury, “considering that this account could not be considered as a novel, disqualified it.” This appears in the note ending the book as a kind of colophon, and from a technical point of view maybe the jury was right, because this story is not a true novel. But it is a vital account written in the depths of the forest, and it basks in the warmth of “welcoming” Mamita Yunai, the United Fruit Company, whose tentacles drain the vitality of the people of Central America and others in South America.

The story is clear, dry and simply written. The first part describes the narrator’s vicissitudes overseeing some elections, with all the dirty tricks that were played, until he returns to Limón and meets an old friend along the way. This meeting leads into the flashback of the second part: his adventures on a banana plantation and the injustice and robbery of the company until one of his coworkers tries to kills a *tútile* [guard], an Italian in the pay of La Yunai, and goes to prison.

The third part, a kind of epilogue in the form of a dialogue between the two, describes their lives in the intervening period, ending with the two men going their separate ways: the author who narrates in first person the struggles for political demands, and his friend who goes to the “Yunai” banana plantations.

There is no doubt that the main character is the author, and he is right not to mix himself up with the people he’s writing about. He sees them suffering, he understands and sympathizes, but he does not identify with them. He is witness rather than actor. He knows the places he is writing about and it is clear he has considerable experience of them. The

psychology of his coworkers and the anecdotes he includes fit well with the text, though there are times when the latter seem a little out of place in the story.

As always with this kind of novel, there is no psychological complexity in the characters, in particular in the “machos” (gringos), who are like “bad guy” cardboard cutouts.

When his recriminations become howls just for effect, he falls into the commonplace of Latin American novels, but the book is, above all, a notable and vivid document describing the outrages of the company and the “authorities,” and the wretched lives of the railway workers (on the railroad lines), to whom the book is dedicated.

---

1. Carlos Luis Fallas Sibaja (1909-66) was a Costa Rican author and political activist, who led the 1934 banana workers strike. His most famous work, *Mamita Yunai* [Little Mother “United”] denounces the exploitation of their workers by the United Fruit Company.

Canto General

by Pablo Neruda[1]

When time has smoothed over these political events a little and has equally, ineluctably, given the people their definitive victory, this book of Neruda's will appear as the greatest symphonic poem of the Americas.

It is poetry constituting a milestone and possibly a summit. Everything in it, even the few (inferior) verses at the end breathe its extraordinary significance. In it, the poet crystallizes the about-face he made when he stopped talking to himself and came down (or up) to speak with us, ordinary mortals, members of the mass of people.

It is the universal hymn of the Americas that retraces everything, from the geographic giants to the shameful little playthings of Mr. Monopoly.

The first chapter is called "A Lamp on Earth" and one hears in it, among other things, his greeting to the immense Amazon:

> Amazon
> Capital of the water's syllables
> patriarchal father...

A fitting metaphor unites with the precise tones of Neruda's portrait, giving us the atmosphere, revealing to us its impact on him, so that he no longer sings as a subtle wanderer but as a man. It is this first chapter of his description, which we could call pre-Columbian, that closes with "Men," our distant ancestors.

> The mineral race was
> like a cup of clay, man
> made of stone and atmosphere,

clean as earthen jugs, sonorous.

The poet then finds the synthesis of what this Latin America of ours was, its greatest symbol, and he sings then to the “Heights of Machu-Picchu.” Machu-Picchu is the work of indigenous engineering that speaks most to us, with its elegant simplicity, its graying sadness, the marvelous landscape that surrounds it and the Urubamba River howling below. His synthesis of Machu-Picchu is achieved in three lines that are descriptions almost in the class of Goethe:

Mother of stone, seaspray of the condors.
Towering reef of the human dawn.
Spade lost in the primal sand.

He is not content merely with defining it and narrating its history so, in an episode of poetic madness, he pulls out of the hat all his dazzling and sometimes hermetic metaphors for the symbol-city, occasionally calling to it for help:

Give me silence, water, hope.
Give me struggle, iron, volcanoes.

What happened? We all know the sequence of the story. “The conquistadors” appear on the horizon:

The butchers razed the islands.
Guanahaní was first
in this story of martyrdom.

Then come Cortés, Alvarado, Balboa, Ximénez de Queseda, Pizarro and Valdivia. All of them are pitilessly savaged by his song, which explodes like pistol fire. The only one for whom the poet has any kindly words is Ercilla, singer of the epic “Araucana”:

Worthy man, sonorous Ercilla, I hear the pulsing

water of your first dawn, a frenzy of birds
and a thunderclap in the foliage.
Leave, oh, leave your blond
eagle's imprint, crush
your cheek against the wild corn,
everything will be devoured in the dust.

Yet the conquest will continue and will mark its own stamp on the Americas, so that Neruda says in "Despite the Fury":

But through fire and horseshoe,
as from a fountain illuminated
by the somber blood,
with the metal engulfed by the tempest,
a light was cast over the earth:
number, name, line and structure.

[...] So with the cruel
titan of stone,
the death-dealing falcon,
not only blood but wheat arrived.
The light came despite the daggers.

But the long night of Spain comes to an end and the night of the monopolies looms. All the greats of the Americas have their place in this hymn, from the early liberators to the new, the priests who struggle side-by-side with the people. Now the sound of gunshot disappears and a great song immerses the reader in its joy and hope. In particular it dreams of the epic of the land, of Lautaro and his guerrilla fighters and Caupolicán, who was impaled. "Lautaro Against the Centaur (1554)" gives a clear idea:

Fatigue and death led
Valdivia's troops through the foliage.

Lautaro's spears drew near.

Amid corpses and leaves Pedro de Valdivia
advanced, as in a tunnel.
Lautaro came in the dark.

He thought about stony Extremadura,
about golden olive oil in the kitchen,
the jasmine left beyond the seas.

He recognized Lautaro's war cry.

[...] Valdivia saw the light coming, the dawn,
perhaps life, the sea.

It was Lautaro.

The mysterious meeting of Guayaquil had to be included in the hymn, and in the lines of their political discussion, the spirits of the two great generals are palpitating. But the story was not all the heroic and honorable struggle of these two generals. There were also betrayers, executioners, jailers and murderers. "The Sand Betrayed" opens with "The Hangmen."

Saurian, scaly America coiled
around vegetable growth, around the flagpole
erected in the swamp:
you nursed terrible children
with poisonous serpent's milk,
torrid cradles incubated
and covered a bloodthirsty
progeny with yellow clay.
The cat and the scorpion fornicated
in the savage land.

And the Rosas, the Francias, the García Morenos, etc., appear and parade by, and not just names but institutions, castes and groups. Neruda asks his colleagues in "Celestial Poets":

What did you do, Gidists,
intellectualists, Rilkists,
mistificators, false existentialist
sorcerers, surrealist
butterflies burning
in a tomb, Europeanized
cadavers of fashion,
pale worms of capitalist
cheese…

And when he comes to the North American companies, his powerful voice exudes sympathy for the victims and disgust and loathing for the octopuses and for all those who fragment and gobble up Our America.

When the trumpet blared everything
on earth was prepared
and Jehovah distributed the world
to Coca-Cola Inc., Anaconda,
Ford Motors and other entities:
United Fruit Inc.
reserved for itself the juiciest,
the central seaboard of my land,
America's sweet waist.

To González Videla, the [Chilean] president who sent him into exile, Neruda shouts:

Wretched clown, miserable
mixture of monkey and rat, whose tail
is combed with gold pomade on Wall Street.

But neither has everything died, and his cry bursts forth from hope.

America, I do not invoke your name in vain.

He concentrates on his own country with the “Canto General of Chile” in which, after describing it and singing to it, he offers his “Winter Ode to the Mapocho River”:

> O, yes, imprecise snow,
> O, yes, trembling in full snowy blossom,
> boreal eyelid, little frozen ray,
> who, who called you to the ashen valley,
> who, who dragged you from the eagle’s beak
> down to where your pure waters touch
> my country’s terrible tatters?

Then comes the land in “The Earth’s Name is Juan,” and through the awkward singing of each worker, the song of Margarita Naranjo is heard, heartbreaking in its naked pathos.

> I am dead. I am from María Elena.

The poet unleashes all his rage against the main guilty parties, against the monopolies, and he addresses his poem “Let the Woodcutter Awaken” to a Yankee soldier:

> West of the Colorado River
> there’s a place that I love.

He warns:

> The world will be implacable for you.
> Not only will the islands be deserted but the air
> that now knows the words that it loves.
>
> […] And from the laboratory covered with vines
> the unleashed atom will also set forth
> toward your proud cities.

González Videla begins the persecution of Neruda, making of him “The Fugitive,” and here his hymn loses a little, for it is as if improvisation has found its pastures in his poetry so that the *Canto’s* lofty metaphor loses height and abandons its delicate rhythms. Then comes “The Flowers of Punitaqui,” after which he greets his Spanish-speaking colleagues. In “New Year’s Chorale for the Country in Darkness” he takes on the Chilean government, and then recalls “The Great Ocean with his Rapa Nui”:

> Tepito-te-henua, navel of the great sea,
> workshop of the sea, extinguished diadem.

The book closes with “I Am,” in which he leaves his last testament, after looking once again at himself:

> I leave my house by the seaside
> in Isla Negra to the labor unions
> of copper, coal and nitrate.
> Let them rest here, those abused children
> of my country, plundered by axes and traitors,
> dispersed in its sacred blood,
> consumed in volcanic tatters.
>
> [...] I leave my old books, collected
> in corners of the globe, venerated
> in their majestic typography,
> to the new poets of America,
> to those who’ll
> one day weave tomorrow’s meanings
> on the raucous interrupted loom.

Finally, he shouts:

> This book ends here.
>
> [...] And this word will rise again,
> perhaps in another time free of sorrow,

without the impure fibers that adhered,
black vegetation in my song,
and my burning and starry heart
will flame again in the heights.
And so this book ends, here I leave
my *Canto general* written
on the run, singing beneath
the clandestine wings of my country.
Today, February 5, in this year
of 1949, in Chile, in “Godemar
de Chena,” a few months before
I turned forty-five.

With this conclusion from François Villon, he ends the greatest volume in Latin American poetry. It is the epic of our time, brushing with its curious wings all that is good and evil in the great land of our birth. There is room for nothing but struggle. As with Arauncana, his brilliant forebear, it is a continuous fight, and its caress is the clumsy caress of the soldier, which is no less loving for being awkward, charged as it is with the power of the earth.

---

1. Pablo Neruda (1904-73) was a Chilean poet and among the most outstanding communist intellectuals of his time. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971 and his epic poem *Canto General* is considered one of the greatest works of Latin American literature.

Guatemala: la democracia y el imperio
[Guatemala: Democracy and Empire]

by Juan José Arévalo[1]

Twenty years have passed since his last book, *La pedagogía de la personalidad* [Pedagogy of the Personality], La Plata: 1937.

Arévalo was president of this small country for six years and, with its backing, stood firm against the arrogant and voracious US monopolies that constantly launched themselves on Guatemala's wealth. After his six years as president, he turned it over to Árbenz; halfway through Árbenz's term, Guatemala was openly attacked. Arévalo recalls memories of his time in the presidency and the offers the United States made to buy him, to get him to accept its rules of the game.

He analyzes the complex panorama of world politics and points with serious irony to the stupidities of US propaganda concerning the "Guatemalan threat." He analyzes the actions that the Árbenz administration took concerning UFCO [United Fruit Company], IRCA [International Railways] and [Electric] Bond and Share and comes to the conclusion that those actions were indirectly responsible for the plundering of Guatemala.

Naturally, no thinking person could believe otherwise, for it was extremely clear, but it takes courage to speak out and say so at this special moment in Latin America's history.

This is not a book that will survive its period; it will die with it because its 100 impassioned pages contain no lasting value. But it is interesting to note the difference 20 years has made between the pedantic work of a young doctor of philosophy and the virile address of a patriot who was the

president of his homeland and who, as such, should always do his utmost to protect his country against efforts to belittle it.

---

1. Juan José Arévalo Bermejo (1904–90) was president of Guatemala (1945-51), who instituted a number of reforms in education, land reform and labor laws.

El Hechicero [The Witch Doctor]

by Carlos Solórzano[1]

A small drama well done. Of philosophical depth, though not very original. When all is said and done, the story of an alchemist enamored by an idea is as old as alchemy itself. The important thing is that the author found a social topic and echoes the cries of the poor.

The topic and its development are classical: Shakespeare *(Hamlet* and *Macbeth)* covered them to a great extent, and O'Neill also contributed to the work.

The witch doctor is killed by his brother, who is egged on by his (the brother's) wife. The couple gains nothing, because the witch doctor had nothing more than illusions—not a formula for making gold. The witch doctor's daughter takes revenge in a way whose psychological complexity is reminiscent of the US playwright.

All of this takes place against the backdrop of a subjugated nation of the hungry, who seek a savior wherever he may be.

---

1. Carlos Solórzano Fernández (1919–2011) was born in Guatemala, but became one of Mexico's most important playwrights. *El Hechicero* was first published in 1954.

Journalism (1953–54)

This article was published as “Un vistazo a las márgenes del gigante de los ríos” while Che Guevara was in Panama in October-November 1953. Published in the *Panamá-América Dominical* supplement, November 22, 1953, it describes some of his experiences in Peru, including his time at the San Pablo leper colony deep in the Amazon, during his first trip through Latin America in 1952.

A View from the Banks of the Giant of Rivers

The Amazon, with its cortege of tributaries, forms an enormous brown continent in the middle of the Americas. During the long rainy months, all of the water courses increase in volume in such a way that the river invades the jungle, turning it into the home of creatures of the water and the air. Beasts of the earth seek refuge on the spots of land that emerge from the water on the brown savannah. Alligators and piranhas (or *caneros)* are the new, dangerous guests of the Tronda, replacing the ocelots, jaguars and peccaries in the task of preventing human beings from setting up camp in the jungle.

Ever since that time long ago when the fearful and famished hosts of Orellana looked upon this muddy sea and in their makeshift boats followed it to the sea, millions of conjectures have been made about the exact birthplace of the giant. For a long time, the Marañón was considered the true source of the river, but modern research has erred toward the other powerful tributary, the Ucayali. By patiently tracing its banks and dividing it up into ever smaller affluents, the researchers came to a tiny lake high in the Andes that feeds the Apurimac, at first a tinkling stream and then a powerful voice of the mountain, thus justifying its Quechua name

apurimac, which means the “great roarer.” This is the birthplace of the Amazon.

But who remembers the pure mountain streams here, where the river has become so colossal and its vast silence increases the mystery of the jungle night? We are in San Pablo, a colony of patients suffering from Hansen’s disease [leprosy] that the Peruvian government maintains at the margins of its territory and which we are using as a base of operations to enter the heart of the forest.

In every image of the jungle, whether Hudson’s polychrome paradises or José E. Rivera’s somber tones, the smallest and most terrible of enemies, the mosquito, never features. In the evening, a shifting cloud floats over the water of the rivers and launches itself at whatever living thing happens to be passing. It’s far more dangerous to enter the jungle without a mosquito net than without a weapon. The fierce carnivores won’t readily attack a human being; not all of the swamps one must wade through are inhabited by alligators or piranhas; nor do the snakes fling themselves on travelers to inject them with their venom or strangle them in a mortal embrace. But the mosquitoes will most certainly attack. They will bite you inexorably all over your body and, in exchange for your blood, they leave troublesome welts and maybe yellow fever or, more frequently, the malaria parasite.

You have to look down at a micro level to see the enemy. Another powerful and invisible one is the anchylostoma, a parasite whose larvae bore their way through the skin of your bare feet and then travel throughout your body to settle in your digestive tract, sucking your blood and causing the very serious anemia from which nearly all the inhabitants of this region suffer to a greater or lesser extent.

We walk through the jungle, following the meandering of an Indian path, heading for the huts of the Yaguas, the indigenous people of the region. The forest is huge and terrifying; its sounds and silences, its furrows of dark water and the clear drops that drip from the leaves—all its so well-orchestrated contradictions—eventually reduce anyone walking to an infinitesimal speck with no thought of their own. To escape from its powerful influence, you have to fix your gaze on the broad, sweaty neck of your guide or on the footprints on the floor of the forest that indicate the presence of humans and recall the strength of the community. When all our clothes were stuck to our bodies and several streams had poured from our

foreheads, we reached the settlement. A small number of huts built on posts in a clearing in the jungle and a thicket of yucca are its wealth—an ephemeral wealth that must be abandoned when the rain swells the veins of the jungle and the water pushes people toward higher ground. The harvest of yucca and palm nuts, the basis of the Indian diet, will enable them to survive.

During the day, the Yaguas live in open-sided houses with palm-frond roofs and a platform that raises them from the humidity of the soil, but, at nightfall, the plague of mosquitoes is stronger than their stoical hides and the evil-smelling oil they smear on their bodies, and they have to seek refuge in huts made of palm fronds, which they close hermetically with a door made of the same material. As long as it is dark, all the members of the tribe remain in their refuge. The promiscuity in which the night is spent does not bother them because the moral codes that govern us mean nothing in their tribal world. I approached the door of a hut, and a stench of strange oils and sweaty bodies immediately repelled me.

The life of these people is reduced to meekly following the orders that nature imparts by means of the rain.

In the winter, they eat yucca and the potatoes they have harvested in the summer, and they go out in their dugout canoes to fish among the thickets of the jungle. It is fascinating to watch them. They have a vigilant immobility that nothing disturbs, small harpoons poised in their right hands. The dark water obscures everything, until suddenly there is a quick movement, and the harpoon is plunged into the deep. The water is agitated for a moment, and then you can see only the tiny buoy at the end of the harpoon, tied to the rod by one or two meters of line. Powerful strokes of the paddle keep the canoe close to the float until the fish becomes too exhausted to struggle.

They also hunt, when the season is favorable. Sometimes they use an old shotgun obtained through who knows what strange transaction to bring down a large animal, but in general, they prefer to use silent blow-pipes. When bands of monkeys pass through the foliage, a small arrow whose point is smeared with curare wounds one of the monkeys. Without even a cry, the monkey extracts the arrow and continues on its way for a few meters until the poison takes effect and it falls from the trees—alive, but unable to emit a sound. As long as the noisy troop of monkeys is passing,

the blow-pipes are used constantly, and the hunters note the points in the foliage where the wounded animals have fallen. When the last monkey has departed the scene of the tragedy, the hunters retrieve all the wounded animals and take their contribution of food back to the community.

Celebrating the arrival of their white visitors, they presented us with one of the monkeys they had killed. We prepared the animal on an improvised spit in the way it is done on our Argentine pampas and tried its meat, which was tough and bitter but had an agreeable, wild taste. The Indians were enthusiastic about our method of preparing the dish.

To reciprocate, we gave them two bottles of a soft drink we had brought with us. The Indians drank the contents excitedly and saved the caps with religious fervor in the pouches of woven fibers that they wear around their necks, which is where they keep their most prized possessions: an amulet, some shotgun cartridges, a seed necklace, a Peruvian sol, etc.

On our return, somewhat anxious about the approaching night, one of them led us along shortcuts that enabled us to reach the safe refuge of the metal roofs of the colony before night fell. We said goodbye with a handshake, in the European style, and the guide gave me a present of one of the fibers from his skirt, the only clothing worn by the Yaguas.

The dangers and tragedies of the wild have often been exaggerated, but we had an experience that shows how valid the warnings are. People always say that it’s dangerous to wander away from the path when you’re in the jungle, and that is certainly true. One day, while relatively close to our base, we suddenly looked at each other in consternation because the path we had hoped to return by seemed to have vanished. We carefully retraced our steps, but it was all in vain.

While one of us stood in a fixed spot, another walked straight ahead and then returned, guided by shouts. We did this in every direction without success. Fortunately, we had been told what to do in case we found ourselves in such a situation. We looked for a special kind of tree, whose roots form partitions a few centimeters thick, which sometimes rise to heights of several meters from the earth and seem to give extra support to the tree.

With an ordinary stick, we began to strike those partitions as hard as we could. This produced a deep sound which, although not very loud, could be heard at a great distance and is much more effective than shooting off a

firearm, for the foliage deadens the sound of shots. After a while, an Indian with a mocking smile appeared with his shotgun and, with signals, led us to the path and showed us the direction we should take. Somehow, we had strayed off course about 500 meters from the path.

It is generally imagined that the jungle is a lush paradise full of food, but that is not true. A knowledgeable local will never die of hunger, but, if others carelessly get lost in the forest, they will have serious problems finding food to eat. None of the kinds of tropical fruits that we know grow spontaneously there. To sustain oneself on wild plants, you have to resort to certain roots and palm fruits that only an experienced person can differentiate from others that look the same but are poisonous. Hunting is extremely difficult for someone who can't identify a broken twig as the trail of a boar or deer, who does not know the watering places and who does not know how to move through the jungle without making a sound. Fishing in a place where the density of aquatic animals is so great is still a very complex art, since the possibility of a fish biting the hook is remote, and it is far from easy to harpoon them. But, when the soil is cultivated, what enormous pineapples, papayas and bananas! A little work is rewarded with tremendous results.

And yet the spirit of the jungle seems to overpower its inhabitants and merge them with itself. Nobody works, unless it is necessary in order to eat. Like the monkeys that seek their daily sustenance in the branches without thinking about tomorrow, or the wild cats that kill only to satisfy their hunger, the colony works only enough to keep themselves from starving.

The days sped by, filled with scientific work, excursions and hunting. The night before we were to leave, two canoes filled with leprosy patients drew close to the pier in the healthy part of the colony to express their affection for us. Their leonine faces in the torchlight were an impressive spectacle in the Amazonian night. A blind singer sang some *huaynitos* and *marineras,* while the motley orchestra did wonders to accompany him. One of the patients gave a farewell speech to thank us; his simple words conveyed a deep emotion that enhanced the impact of the night. For those simple souls, the mere fact that we had come to visit them, even out of curiosity, made us deserving of their gratitude. The serenade and farewell ended with embarrassing grimaces as they attempted to express their affection without shaking hands because the health laws categorically

forbid physical contact between the patients and the healthy. The music and the farewell cemented our commitment to them.

The small raft on which we continued our river journey was crammed with gifts of food from both the members of the colony and from the sick, who competed in giving us the most food, the sweetest papaya and the fattest chicken. Then a little push toward the middle of the river, and we were talking to the river alone.

> The song of the jungle
> and the pain that is there
> come over the river
> on the rafts that arrive.
> The hardened boatmen
> come drowning their sorrow
> over the bloody routes
> of the spiraling river.

We drifted down the river for two days, waiting for the moment when we would see Leticia, the Colombian city we wanted to reach, but there was a serious drawback—we couldn't steer the hulk. Everything was fine as long as we were in the middle of the river, but whenever we tried to draw close to the bank, we had a furious battle with the current—which always emerged victorious, keeping us in the middle until, at a whim, we were allowed to reach whichever shore the river chose for us.

On the night of the third day, we finally saw the lights of the town—but the raft continued on its way unperturbed, in spite of every effort we made. Whenever it seemed as if we were about to win, the logs of the raft would make a pirouette and head once more toward the middle of the current.

We struggled until we could no longer see the lights upstream and were about to take refuge under the mosquito net, abandoning the guard duty we did occasionally, when the last chicken—the tasty dinner we were longing for—took fright and fell into the water. The current carried it a little faster than it carried us. I stripped off my clothes and was about to jump in after it—one or two strokes would take me to it, and then all I'd have to do would be to wait for the raft to catch up—but I hesitated. I don't really know why;

it may have been the enigmatic river or the subconscious thought of an alligator. But, in any case, the chicken sailed on down the river, while I, raging inwardly, kept promising myself that I would jump in and then holding off again, until I gave up. Frankly, the nocturnal river scared me; I was a coward in the face of nature. Later, both of us were extremely hypocritical, consoling each other about the poor chicken's terrible fate.

When we woke up, we were aground on the Brazilian side, many paddling hours from Leticia. But we did manage to get back there, thanks to the proverbial kindness of the people living along the gigantic river.

When we flew out in the Colombian Armed Forces Catalina, we looked down on the immense jungle. From above, it seemed like an enormous green cauliflower barely broken by the brown thread of a narrow river, extending for thousands of kilometers and hours of flying time. We saw that our months-long intimate friendship had been with only an infinitesimal part of the gigantic Amazonian continent, and this realization had us lowering our heads in reverence.

Far below, the spirit of Canaima, God of the Jungle, emerging from the foliage and floating on the rivers, raised his hand in a gesture of farewell.

Machu-Picchu: Enigma in Stone of the Americas

This article, "Machu-Picchu, un enigma de piedra en América," was published in the Panamanian weekly supplement to *Siete*, December 12, 1953. It draws on Che's visits to Machu-Picchu during both his 1952 and 1953 journeys through Latin America. Not knowing if he would ever have the opportunity to return to the ancient Inca city, he commented: "It is one of the most marvelous sights I can imagine."

Crowning a hill of steep and rugged slopes, 2,800 meters above sea level and 400 above the fast-flowing Urubamba River that bathes three sides of this peak, is the ancient city in stone that, by extension, has been given the name of the place that is its bastion: Machu-Picchu.

Is this its original name? No. In Quechua, Machu-Picchu means "Old Mountain," as opposed to Huayna-Picchu, the rocky needle rising just a few meters from the settlement, which means "Young Mountain." They are simply physical descriptions of the topographical features of the place. What would its real name be then? Let us diverge for a moment and travel back to the past.

The 16th century of our age was a tragic time for the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The bearded invader flooded the continent and the great indigenous empires were reduced to rubble. In the center of South America, the internecine struggle for power between the two candidates to inherit the crown of the deceased Huayna-Capac, Atahualpa and Huascar made the business of destroying the greatest empire of the continent even easier.

In order to contain the human mass approaching perilously close to Cuzco, one of Huascar's nephews, the youthful Manco II, was placed on the throne by Spain. This maneuver had an unexpected consequence: although the indigenous people now had a visible head, bestowed with all the formalities of Inca law still possible under the Spanish yoke, the monarch was not as easy to control as the Spaniards wished. He disappeared one night with his leading chiefs, bearing with him the great disc of gold, symbol of the sun, and from that day onward, there was no peace in the old capital of the empire.

There was no security; moving from one place to another was not safe. Armed bands used the ancient, impressive and now-destroyed Sacsahuamán as their base, the fortress guarding Cuzco. They roamed the territory and even moved in on the city.

It was 1536.

This large-scale revolt failed, the siege of Cuzco had to be abandoned, and another major battle at Ollantaitambo, the walled city on the banks of the Urubamba River, was lost by the troops of the indigenous monarch. The threat of the guerrilla war, which had been a considerable thorn in the side of Spanish might, was definitively reduced. One day, in a drunken outburst, one of the conquistador soldiers, a deserter who had been brought to the indigenous court along with six of his companions, killed the Inca sovereign. He and his unfortunate compatriots were put to a horrible death by the indigenous subjects, who displayed their severed heads on their spears as both punishment and challenge. The sovereign's three sons, Sairy Túpac, Tito Cusi and Túpac Amaru, reigned consecutively and died while in power. With the third, however, something more than a monarch passed into death: it was the final demise of the Inca empire.

The forceful and inflexible viceroy, Francisco Toledo, took this last sovereign as his prisoner and had him executed in Cuzco's parade ground in 1572. The Inca king, whose life—secluded in the temple of the sun virgins,

with a brief parenthesis as sovereign—ended so tragically, addressed his people in his final hour. His potent speech roused them from their former torpor and meant that his name would be taken up again by the precursor of the independence of the Americas: José Gabriel Condorcanqui, Túpac Amaru II.

The danger to the representatives of the Spanish crown had been extinguished and nobody thought to seek out the old operational base of the Incas, the well-concealed city of Vilcapampa, whose last sovereign had left before being taken prisoner. Thus began a period of three centuries in which total silence reigned over the city. When an Italian man of science, Antonio Raimondi, devoted 19 years of his life to traveling all over the country in the second half of the 19th century, Peru was a land still largely untouched by the European. Although it is true Raimondi was not a professional archaeologist, his profound erudition and scientific skills gave an enormous impetus to the study of the country's Inca past. Generations of Peruvian students now turned their eyes to the heart of a country they did not know, guided by the monumental work *El Perú,* while scientists from all over the world once again recovered their enthusiasm for investigating the history of a once great people.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a US historian, Professor Bingham, who had come to Peru to study the route taken by [Simón] Bolívar, was captivated by the extraordinary beauty of the regions he visited and intrigued by the provocative questions raised by Inca culture. Professor Bingham, satisfying both the historian and the adventurer within him, set out in search of the lost city, the operational base of the insurgent monarchs.

Bingham knew, from the chronicles of Father Calancha and others, that the Incas had a political and military capital they named Vitcos, and a more distant sanctuary called Vilcapampa, the city where no white person had ever set foot. Armed with this information, he set out on his search.

Anyone with even a superficial knowledge of the region will not be unaware of the magnitude of the task he had set himself. In mountainous terrain, covered with dense, subtropical forest, crisscrossed by rivers that were more like highly dangerous torrents, not knowing the psychology or even the language of its inhabitants, Bingham set off with three powerful weapons: an indomitable zest for adventure, keen intuition and a healthy fistful of dollars.

Patiently, paying a price in gold for each secret or piece of information he could extract, he penetrated the heartland of the extinct civilization. One day in 1911, after years of arduous labor, routinely following an Indian who was selling an unusual set of stones, Bingham, unaccompanied by any other white man, found himself marveling alone at the impressive ruins that, surrounded and almost submerged in undergrowth, were there to welcome him.

There is a sad side to this story. The undergrowth was cleared from the ruins, which were then studied and perfectly described... and totally stripped of whatever objects that were uncovered. Researchers triumphantly bore off to their country more than 200 crates of archaeological treasures that were both invaluable and, let us be clear about this, worth a great deal of money. Bingham is, objectively speaking, not specifically guilty of this and neither are the citizens of North America guilty in general. Nor can anyone blame a government without the resources to support an expedition on a scale comparable to that of the discovery of Machu-Picchu. Is no one guilty then? Let us just accept the fact that the answer to the question of where one might study or admire the treasures of the indigenous city is obvious: in the museums of North America.

Machu-Picchu was not just any old discovery for Bingham. It was the triumphant crowning of an overgrown child's limpid dreams— like the dreams of almost every amateur in this area of science. A long series of triumphs and failures culminated there, and the city of gray stone encompassed all his fantasies and his visions, propelling him into comparison and conjecture that was at times far removed from careful and empirical demonstration. The years of exploration and those that followed his success made an erudite archaeologist of the formerly itinerant historian; many of his assertions, backed by the formidable experience acquired in his travels, were taken as gospel truth in scientific circles.

In Bingham's view, Machu-Picchu was the ancient abode of the Quechua people and the center from which they expanded before founding Cuzco. He delved into Inca mythology and identified three windows of a ruined temple as those from which the Ayllus brothers, characters in Inca mythology, had emerged. He found conclusive similarities between a circular tower in the newly revealed city and Cuzco's sun temple. He identified skeletons that had been found in the ruins, almost all of them

female, as being those of the sun virgins. Finally, after carefully analyzing all the possibilities, he came to the following conclusion: The city he had discovered had been named Vilcapampa more than three centuries earlier. This, he said, had been the sanctuary of the rebel monarchs, and had previously served as a refuge for the vanquished followers of the Inca leader Pachacuti (whose body lay in the city) from the time of their defeat by Chincha troops until the resurgence of the empire. But the reason this city had in both cases been the refuge of vanquished warriors was because this was Tampu-Toco, sacred place and initial nucleus, located here and not at Pacaru-Tampu, near Cuzco, as Indian notables told the historian Sarmiento de Gamboa, who interrogated them on the orders of Viceroy Toledo.

Modern researchers have disagreed on many points with the archaeologist from North America, but they have nothing conclusive to say about the significance of Machu-Picchu.

After several hours, the train, an asthmatic, almost toy-like thing, that runs first along a small river to continue later along the banks of the Urubamba, passing the stately ruins of Ollantaitambo, eventually comes to the bridge crossing the river. A winding track of some eight kilometers climbs 400 meters above the torrent, bringing us to the hotel in the ruins, which is run by a Señor Soto. He is a man of extraordinary knowledge in Inca matters, and a good singer, who, in the delicious tropical evenings, contributes to enhancing the suggestive charms of the ruined city.

Machu-Picchu is constructed on the top of a mountain, covering an area of some two kilometers in perimeter. It is basically divided into three sections: that of the two temples, another for the main residences and an area for the common people.

In the section reserved for religious activities are the ruins of a magnificent temple made of great blocks of white granite, with the three windows that gave rise to Bingham’s mythological speculations. Adorning a series of beautifully constructed buildings is the Intiwatana, where the sun is moored: a stone finger some 60 centimeters high, the basis of indigenous rites and one of few such pieces still standing since the Spaniards were careful to destroy this symbol upon conquering any Inca fortress.

The buildings that housed the nobility show examples of extraordinary artistic value, for example the circular tower I have already mentioned, the

sequence of bridges and canals cut into the stone and the many residences that are notable for the execution of their stonemasonry.

In the dwellings presumably occupied by the plebeians, one notes a great difference in the rough finish of the rock. They are separated from the religious part of the complex by a small square, or flat area, where the main water reservoirs—now dried up—were located, this supposedly being one of the main reasons for abandoning the place as a permanent residence.

Machu-Picchu is a city of steps with almost all of its constructions built on different levels, united by stairways, some of exquisitely carved rock, and others of stones aligned without much aesthetic zeal. But all of them, like the city as a whole, were capable of standing up to the rigors of the weather, and lost only their roofs made of tree trunks and straw, unable to resist the assault of the elements.

Dietary needs were satisfied by vegetables planted in the terraces that are still perfectly conserved.

It was very easy to defend, surrounded on two sides by almost vertical slopes, a third passable only along readily defendable tracks, while the fourth faces Huayna-Picchu. This peak towers some 200 meters over its brother. It is difficult to climb, and would be almost impossible for the tourist, were it not for the remains of the Inca paving enabling one to edge to its peak along sheer precipices. The place seems to have been more for observation than anything else, since there are no major constructions. The Urubamba River encircles the two peaks almost completely, so they are almost impossible for attacking forces to conquer.

I have already noted that the archaeological meaning of Machu-Picchu is disputed, but the origin of the city is not the vital thing and, in any case, it is best to leave the debate to specialists.

Most important and irrefutable is that here we have found the pure expression of the most powerful indigenous civilization in the Americas—still untainted by contact with conquering armies and replete with immensely evocative treasures between its walls that have deteriorated from the tedium of having no life among them. The spectacular landscape circling the fortress supplies an essential backdrop, inspiring dreamers to wander its ruins aimlessly; Yankee tourists, bound by their practical worldview, might place those members of the disintegrating tribes they encounter in their travels among these once-living walls, unaware of the

moral distance that separates them, because the subtle difference can only be grasped by the semi-indigenous spirit of the Latin American.

Let us agree, for the moment, to give the city two possible meanings: one for the fighter, pursuing what is today described as a chimera, with an arm reaching toward the future and a stone voice crying out to be heard all over the continent: “Citizens of Indo-America, reconquer the past!” And for others, those with a desire to be “far from the madding crowd,” there are some appropriate words jotted down by a British subject in the hotel visitors’ book, conveying all the bitterness of imperial yearning: “I am lucky to find a place without Coca-Cola propaganda.”

The Dilemma of Guatemala

This article was first published in the book *Aquí va un soldado de América* [Here Comes a Soldier of the Americas], a collection selected by Che Guevara’s father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, which includes letters sent to his relatives while he was on his second trip. This article, and the article that follows in this book, “The Working Class in the United States,” were sent to Argentina when Che left Guatemala for Mexico, where he arrived on September 18, 1954.

Anyone who has traveled these lands of the Americas will have heard the disdainful pronouncements of some people about certain regimes with clearly democratic leanings. These sentiments date from the Spanish Republic and its fall. At that time they said the republic consisted of a mob of layabouts who only knew how to dance the *jota*, and that Franco established order and exiled communism from Spain. Time polished such opinions, standardizing criteria, and the words used, like stones thrown at any moribund democracy, went along the lines of, “That was not liberty, but the rule of libertines.”

The governments that in Peru, Venezuela and Cuba had held out the dream of a new era for the Americas were thus defined. The price that democratic groups in these countries have had to pay for their apprenticeship in the techniques of oppression has been high. A great number of innocent victims have been immolated to maintain an order required for the interests of the feudal bourgeoisie and foreign capital. Patriots now know that victory will have to be achieved by blood and fire, that there can be no forgiveness for traitors, and that the total extermination

of reactionary groups is the only way to ensure the rule of justice in the Americas.

When I once again heard the words “rule of libertines” used to describe Guatemala, I feared for the small republic. Does it mean that the resurrection of the dream of the Latin American people, embodied by this country and by Bolivia, is condemned to go the way of its precursors? Herein lies the dilemma.

Four revolutionary parties constitute the support base of the government and all of them, except for the Guatemalan Workers Party [PGT], are fragmented into two or more antagonistic factions that fight among themselves even more viciously than with their traditional feudal enemies, forgetting in their domestic squabbles the aspirations of the Guatemalan people. Meanwhile, the reactionary forces spread their nets wide. The US State Department and the United Fruit Company—one never knows which is which in that country to the north—in open alliance with the landowners and the spineless, sanctimonious bourgeoisie—are making all kinds of plans to silence a proud adversary that has emerged for them like a boil on the bosom of the Caribbean. While Caracas awaits orders that will open the way for more or less barefaced interference, the displaced little generals and the craven coffee growers seek to make alliances with other dictators in neighboring countries.

And while in the adjoining countries the fully muzzled press can only sing the praises of the “leader” on the only note permitted them, what pass for “independent” newspapers here unleash a farrago of long, involved stories about the government and its defenders, creating whatever climate they want. Democracy permits this.

The “beachhead of communism,” setting a magnificent example of freedom and ingenuity, allows them to undermine their own nationalist foundations, permitting the destruction of yet another of Latin America’s dreams.

Look back a little at the immediate past, compañeros, and observe the leaders who have had to flee, the murdered or imprisoned members of APRA [American Popular Revolutionary Alliance] in Peru, of Democratic Action in Venezuela, and look at the magnificent young Cubans assassinated by Batista. Draw close to the 20 bullet wounds in the body of the poet soldier, Ruiz Pineda, and look at the miasmas of the Venezuelan

prisons. Look fearlessly, but with care, at this past that serves as an example, and answer this question: is this the future of Guatemala?

Has the struggle been, is the struggle, for this? The historic responsibility of those who must fulfill the hopes of Latin America is great. The time for euphemism is over. It is time that garrote answers garrote. If one must die, let it be like Sandino and not like [Spanish President] Azaña.

May treacherous guns be grasped not by Guatemalan hands. If they want to kill freedom, let it be the other side that does it, those who hide freedom away. We must do away with feebleness and refuse to pardon treason. Let not the unshed blood of a traitor cost the lives of thousands of brave defenders of the people. The old dilemma of Hamlet has come to my lips, in the words of a poet from Guatemala-America: “Are you or are you not, or who are you?” Let the groups that support the government answer this.

The Workers of the United States: Friends or Enemies?

This article was written in or around April 1954 and sent to his family from Guatemala before Che Guevara left for Mexico. It was first published in *Aquí va un soldado de América* [Here Comes a Soldier of the Americas] by his father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, in 1987.

Today’s world is divided in two different halves: one in which capitalism holds sway, with all its consequences, and the other in which socialism has been established. But the countries with the capitalist system cannot be grouped in a single category. There are marked differences among them.

There are colonial countries, in which the large landowning class, allied with foreign capital, monopolizes the life of the community and keeps the nation in the backwardness required for that class to maintain its profits. Nearly all countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America are of this type.

There are a few countries in which capitalism has not extended beyond national borders and where the intrusion of foreign capital is not such a pressing problem. A few European countries with a very developed petit bourgeoisie are like this.

There is another interesting group of countries that might be described as colonial-imperialist or pre-imperialist. Although their economies have

not yet taken on the characteristics of industrialized nations, they are beginning, along with the paternal capital that subjugates them, to seek export markets, mainly from among the countries that belong to the colonial group. This is the case with Argentina, Brazil, India and Egypt. A prevailing characteristic of these countries is their tendency to form blocs with those over whom they exercise some influence.

One of the most important groups comprises those nations whose imperialist expansion has been held back since the last war [World War II]. This is the case of the Netherlands, Italy, France and—most importantly—Britain. Even though we are witnessing the dismemberment of the colossal British Empire, its representatives are still fighting. Naturally, oppressed peoples' entirely justified desire for freedom is resisted by US big capital's plundering, and this causes a crisis in which each side pursues its own interests (as in Iran).

Finally, there are fully developed, expanding imperialist countries, of which there is only one: the United States, Latin America's greatest problem. We may wonder why, in the United States, a highly industrialized country with all the characteristics of a capitalist empire, the sharp conflict between capital and the working class does not exist. The answer lies in that country's special conditions. Except for black people, who are segregated and represent the seed of the first serious rebellion, the other workers (those with jobs, naturally) receive high wages, relative to what capitalist companies usually pay, because the difference between what is normally required to create surplus value and their real pay is more than compensated for by the low wages paid to the workers elsewhere, such as in Asia and Latin America.

Asia is experiencing great convulsions in the wake of the Chinese people's magnificent victory, and is struggling with renewed faith in its liberation. As an extremely cheap source of raw materials and labor it is gradually escaping from the grasp of imperialist capital. But capital is not going to accept that defeat and will shift its cost onto the shoulders of the working class.

Even though, in one sense, the victory in Asia hurts Latin Americans, the workers in the United States also feel its impact in the form of fewer jobs and lower real wages. The US masses, who have a complete lack of political understanding, can't see the source of the problem farther than

their own noses. Instead, all they see is the triumph of “communist barbarism over democracy.” A combative reaction is logical but hard to carry out: Asia is very far away and has many people who are willing to fight to the death to protect their own land. And the US petit bourgeoisie, whose political weight is enormous, won’t allow even a tiny number of their soldiers to be killed on foreign soil.

Faced with the imminent, inexorable loss of Asia, the imperialist power has two alternatives: total war against the socialist enemy and the nationalist peoples or the abandonment of Asia and the acceptance of the reduction of its sphere of influence to the two regions that it has managed to control so far—Africa and Latin America. Naturally, it will continue to engage in small, limited wars that benefit its arms industry without loss of life, since it can always find traitorous governments that are ready to sacrifice their own countries for the crumbs thrown by their master.

The United States is afraid of total war. It can’t launch a nuclear attack because the reprisals would be terrible at this point in time, and, in an “orthodox” war, it would lose Europe in an instant and nearly all of Asia within a short time. In view of this, the United States tends to defend its long-held possessions in Latin America and its recently acquired ones in Africa.

These two areas present different panoramas. Here in Latin America, US control is complete and accepts no outside interference. There, in Africa, the United States possesses only small patches of territory and exercises its control through client states scattered throughout the continent. Therefore, in Africa, internal dissension, struggles and manifestations of nationalism are tolerated and even provoked by the United States, whose imperial clout will increase as the traditional rulers grow gradually weaker.

Any expression of real nationalism will lead the peoples of Latin America to try to emancipate themselves from their oppressor—monopoly capital. But the vast majority of the owners of that capital are in the United States and have an enormous influence on the decisions of the US government. The formation of US government cabinets and the connections its members have with the most important companies show how our northern neighbors’ politics work.

In this period of vacillation, when the United States has assumed the leadership of the so-called free world, no one can attack or interfere in any

country unless it is in the name of fighting “international communism.” This is the old tune played in current-day propaganda, trotting out all its effectively manipulated lies. Later, the United States may resort to economic intervention and—why not?—armed intervention, as well.

This entire defensive system is of vital importance to the capitalists if they want to maintain their present system. But it is also important, for a limited time, to the US working class, since the abrupt loss of cheap sources of raw materials would immediately highlight the inherent conflict between capital and the working class, and the result would be disastrous for the latter unless it seized the means of production. I repeat that we cannot demand that the US working class look farther than its noses. It would be useless to try to explain—from a distance and with the press entirely controlled by big capital—that the process of the internal decay of capitalism can only be halted temporarily, not permanently, by whatever totalitarian measures may be taken to maintain the colonial status of Latin America.

The reaction of the working class would be to support the United States (and this would be logical, to some extent), falling in behind any slogan—such as, in this case, “anti-communism.” Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the function of unions in the United States is to serve as buffers between the two conflicting class forces and, surreptitiously, to restrain the revolutionary power of the masses.

With this background, and in view of the situation in the United States, it is not hard to guess what the attitude of the US working class will be when faced with the abrupt loss of overseas markets and sources of cheap raw materials.

This, I believe, is the crude reality that we Latin Americans must confront. The economic development of the United States and the workers’ need to maintain their standard of living are the factors that, in the final analysis, will make it necessary to wage the struggle for freedom not against a given social regime but against the nation that, united in a single armed bloc by the supreme law of its common interest, will defend its trusteeship over the economic life of Latin America.

Therefore, we must prepare to struggle against the entire people of the United States. The fruits of victory will be not only our economic liberation

and social equality but also a new and welcome younger brother: the proletariat of that country.

Poems

This selection of some of the poems Che Guevara wrote as a young man reveals the impact of his experiences in his travels around Latin America as well as a remarkable poetic sensibility.

To the Bolivian Miners

On an April 9[1]

The thunder bolts
with a matchless roar.
A hundred thousand thunderbolts,
and the song is deep.
The miners are coming,
the people's miners,
men who stir
when they rise for the sun,
who dominate thunder
and love its mighty roar.

Men harvested by shrapnel
and dynamite
bursts,
whose bodies disintegrate
into shards of horror,
when a bullet reaches
their igneous belt.

IT DOESN'T MATTER!

The thunder bolts
with a matchless roar.
A hundred thousand thunderbolts,
and the song is deep.
From thunder's mouth,
the sound of courage on the wing.
Miners of steel,
the people, their pain.

They emerge from a cavern
clinging to the mountain.
Clusters of burrowing creatures
who come to die
fearless against the shrapnel.
To die, that's the word,
true North of their days;
die torn apart,
die of silicosis,
die of anemia,
die slowly, in agony,
in a collapsed cave.

Who Cares?

María Bárzola is their guide
and there are springs that push
these fighting tunnelers:
Those who sleep in their beds
are non-women women,
skeletal children
suckling at their breasts;
hunger and misery,
the human thirst for justice,
drives this fierce armed flock
to combat.

They launch Bolivia
from her death ignored,
promising her a future
at the cost of their life.

“When the tin barons fall
and the people say, ‘these are mine,’
these guns will be silent,
and the thunder too,
on the barren fields,
the *pututu* will not sound
nor will new cries be heard,
and joyful backs
will bend under the weight
of all that is ours.”

M.I.O.

Spain in America

Guatemala, do you remember
Those July days in 1936?
Of course you do.
In your rocky skeleton,
in your singing veins,
your green hair,
your volcanic breast,
you remember it.

Like me,
with my child’s memory
sucking at the past,
your invertebrate memory blooms,
of democracy in its infancy,
the distant rattle of childhood.

Your old poets remember it,
your young poets guess at it:
in Granada and at a night without dawn,
where lead poured from the hands
as crying bullets drowned
the voice of the Gypsy King.
All your singers remember it.

Granada, Banana,
fresh names for saccharine fruits.
Granada, Banana,

tragic symbols of man at twilight.
Over there, in Europe, the ones “with
—that’s why they don’t cry—
skulls of lead.”
Here, in America, those who sell themselves
—for what they’re given—
a fruit company dollar.

They couldn’t shred poets,
but with grenades they opened
—like saccharine pomegranates—
the breasts of your people’s sons.
The crime of being free led them to the cemetery.
The crime of being men put them among the dead.
And the puppets shouted,
killed, mocked,
with the voice and action
of “mama” Fruit Company.

Castillo Armas here
there he was called Franco.
Two names and a bloodstained people,
cementing the old embrace with a cry.
And Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini?

All dead, but their children thrive.
The large sapling where the Axis persists
is a venerable grandfather with a lustrous dome,
an evangelical word and treacherous dagger.
With religious unction he worships ancestors
and lights candles to the head of the clan,
the mythical slaver;
Mr. Monopoly.

And Chamberlain, didn't he have children?
Oh, he did!
Oh, his putrid sperm
germinated in America.
The traitors are called Vargas and Pinillas
who the peoples' face
stained with shame.
(Not to speak of Somoza or Gálves,
old shit receptacles)
American blood on their hands,
spit on their faces
from the children of Brazil, Colombia,
Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

"I assure you the defense of the Western world."
"I will never forget the glorious general."
How the jackals howl at night!
How the grandfather sics his coyotes!
But the story consumed decades
showing just how far fear would drive one.
No graves for Hitler or Mussolini
Not even flowers to tug at memory.
Open half the world's eyes,
the other half is already awake.

Guernica, Chiquimula,
bombs linking sister democracies.

Sisters in innocents dead,
sisters in blood shed,
sisters in desperate powerlessness.

Guatemala, your people awake,
as they awoke in Madrid and
from Mexico to Argentina,
your Latina sisters
hail you as their champion.
Guatemala, Guatemala,
hope of America!
Call to the people, they will shout “Here.”
Together we will punish the nuclear dagger
and light their own powder keg,
and the entire continent will smile in admiration
at the red flare awaited by the people.

M.I.O.
June 1954

A Tear for You

Oh, Guatemala,
I prepared my blood in red battalions
to be fully spilled on the holy land.
I kept it intact
in my purple rank of unharmed soldier!

My insomnia glimpses the silences of defeat.
I feel them, in aftertastes of bitter honey,
greasing my actions with suspicion.

Fallen sheaf, Guatemala.
Day, hope, example of America, fallen sheaf.
Titan of ashes!
Disintegrated image of defeated faith!

The dust announced by ruin
forms clouds in the grayish air.
On the horizon they mingle
with the dark clouds kicked up by the hooves
of centaur-octopuses of blonde lineage.
They come thirsting for your fresh sap;
They will sip it, “for democracy.”

My eyes cannot stay dry forever
when those of your people are so moist.
People cry, Guatemala, but they believe.
They cry but know the future is faithful.

For the one who didn’t die at the time of battle
(the same who dies now without heaven as a witness);
for the one who escaped death and found it again;
for the pain of losing you and of having lost you;
for the enormous tear that people cry;
for the future;
for you and me;
Guatemala, now that I go away,
I send this hopeful and sorrowful tear
to talk about the future with your unarmed people.

M.I.O.

September 1954

Invitation to the Road

To Helena Leiva Sister, victory is still a long way off

Sister, victory is still a long way off.
The road is long and the present uncertain;
tomorrow is ours!
Don’t stand at the roadside.
Quench your feet with this eternal dust.

I know your weariness and great anxiety;
I know that in combat your blood will oppose you
and I know that you will die before harming it;
Come to the reconquest, not to the massacre.

If you despise the rifle take up faith;
if faith fails you, cast a sob;
if you can't cry, don't do it
but move ahead, friend,
even without weapons and the North denied to you.

I don't invite you to regions of illusion,
There won't be gods, paradise, or devils
—perhaps dark death without a cross to mark it—
Help us sister, don't let fear stop you,
Let's put heaven in hell!

Don't look at the clouds, the birds or the wind;
our castles have roots in the soil.
Look at the dust, the earth contains
the hungry injustice of the human essence.
Here that same hell is hope.

I don't tell you there, behind that hill;
I'm not saying there, where dust is lost;
I'm not giving you a fixed timeline...
I say: come, give me your warm hand
—the one that has felt my wiped away tears—
Sister, mother, compañera... COMPAÑERO!
This road leads to the battle.

Forget your tiredness, forget your fears,
forget your minor daily anxieties.
Who cares about the acrid dust, about the pitfalls?
Who cares if your sons do not hear the call?
We'll go and find them in their green-back prison.

Compañero, follow me, it’s time to go...

December 1954

Uaxactún... Sleeps

To Morley, an unknown and respected friend

Uaxactún, she of gray dreams,
hidden voice behind the mystery;
sleeping beauty of our forests!
I came to kiss your girth,
the green tangle of hair,
the air that measures silence.
Uaxactún, Uaxactún.
I know that your death is the white man’s invention:
tired of walking through the centuries, you slept,
solitary compañera of an infinite mountain.
I imagine sleep overtook you,
When you reached your brown blood
— bronze shoots— flowing with the winds,
Uaxactún, Uaxactún.

Mimicking through atavistic gesture
the dispersion that brought
an Asian ancestor across the seas.
And when you shouted your cry of farewell
paying last respects to the grandfather’s grandfather,
a Quetzal Tekun.
Uaxactún, Uaxactún.

And when you closed your temple eyes,
And crossed your arms made of trails
(stopped watches that put time to sleep).
All the more your haunted stillness and silence
will yield to the influence of a handsome prince
than to his kissed command to “rise and walk.”

Uaxactún, Uaxactún.

It is heard in your dream of signs
the song of dawn's larks,
announcing the end of the night
when your new bronze shoots
bathe in the sun that lights THEIR lands.

UAXACTÚN
UAXACTÚN
It is the end of the dream:
the prince is here;
he becomes the people
with fifes and drums,
sowing red examples
in the heart of America.

M.I.O.

---

1. This poem was inspired by the April 9, 1952, Bolivian miners' uprising that overthrew the military dictatorship in that country.

Selected Letters (1953–56)

These letters are taken from Che Guevara's *Latin America Diaries* (or *Otra Vez)* and the book by Che's father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, *Aquí va un soldado de América* [Here Comes a Soldier of the Americas]. Written during his second trip through Latin America (between October 21, 1953, and his departure for Cuba in December 1956), despite their intimate, very personal tone, they clearly express Che's emerging political ideas and the seeds of his future trajectory.

Letter to his mother

Guayaquil, Ecuador
[October 21, 1953]

I am writing you this letter (who knows when you'll read it) about my new position as a 100 percent adventurer. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the news in my last epistle.

The gist is: As Calica García (one of our acquisitions) and I were traveling along for a while, we felt homesick for our beloved homeland. We talked about how good it was for the two members of the group who had managed to leave for Panama, and commented on the fantastic interview with X.X., that guardian angel you gave me, which I'll tell you about later. The thing is, ["Gaulo"] García[1] — almost in passing—invited us to go to Guatemala, and I was disposed to accept. Calica promised to give his answer the next day, and it was affirmative, so there were four new candidates for Yankee opprobrium.

But then our trials and tribulations in the consulates began, with our daily pleas for the Panamanian visas we required and, after several psychological ups and downs, he seemed to decide not to go. Your suit—your masterpiece, the pearl of your dreams—died heroically in a pawnshop,

as did all the other unnecessary things in my luggage, which has been greatly reduced for the good of [our] trio's economic stability—now achieved (whew!).

What this means is that if a captain, who is a sort of friend, agrees to use an old trick, García and I can travel to Panama, and then the combined efforts of those who want to reach Guatemala, plus those from there, will drag along the straggler left behind as security for the remaining debts. If the captain I mentioned messes it up, the same two partners in crime will go on to Colombia, again leaving the security here, and will head for Guatemala in whatever Almighty God unwarily places within their reach. […]

Guayaquil, [October] 24

After a lot of coming and going and many calls, plus a discreet bribe, we have the visa for Panama. We'll leave tomorrow, Sunday, and will get there by the 29th or 30th. I have written this quick note at the consulate.

Ernesto

Letter to his Aunt Beatriz

San José, Costa Rica
December 10, 1953

Auntie-auntie-mine,

My life has been a sea of conflicting decisions until I bravely abandoned my baggage and, pack on my back, set off with my compañero García on the winding road that has led us here. In El Paso, I had the chance to travel through the realms of United Fruit [Company], which once again convinced me of how terrible these capitalist octopuses are. I have sworn before a picture of the old and lately lamented Stalin not to rest until I see these

capitalist octopuses wiped out. In Guatemala, I shall improve myself and achieve what I lack to become a true revolutionary.

I must tell you that, apart from being a doctor, I am also a journalist and lecturer, activities which bring (though only a few) US dollars.

Along with all the rest, hugs, kisses and love from your nephew, he of the iron constitution, empty stomach and shining faith in a socialist future.

Ciao,

Chancho[2]

Letter to his Aunt Beatriz

Guatemala

January 5, 1954

…In any case, money doesn't mean much to me because I'm following the burro's example (I keep going for six pieces of straw a day). This is a country where you can breathe deeply and fill your lungs with democracy. The United Fruit Company controls all the newspapers, and if I were Árbenz, I'd close them down in five minutes because they are shameless; they say whatever they want and are creating the kind of atmosphere that the United States wants, painting this as a den of thieves, communists, traitors, etc. I won't tell you that this is a country that breathes abundance or anything like it, but there are possibilities for working honestly on interesting things. And, if I manage to cut through the somewhat troublesome bureaucracy, I'll stay here for a while.

Letter to his Aunt Beatriz

Guatemala

February 12, 1954

My very dear, always adored and never duly praised aunt,

I was really pleased to receive your last letter, the culmination and complement of the two previous “capitalist” ones, of which I only received one, meaning that the democratic post office employee made a just distribution of wealth.

Don’t send me any more money as it will cost you all the silver in Peru. I can find all the dollar bills I need here paving the ground, and I can tell you I ended up with lumbago after so much bending over to pick them up at the beginning. Now I only take one in every 10, just to maintain public hygiene standards because so much paper flying about and on the ground is a hazard.

My plan for the coming years: at least six months in Guatemala, if I don’t find anything that is well enough paid to permit me to stay for two years. In the first case, I’ll go and work in another country for a year, which might mean, in diminishing order of probability, Venezuela, Mexico, Cuba and the United States.

If the two-year plan comes off, after a visit to the three latter countries, along with Haiti and Santo Domingo, I’m off to Western Europe, where I’ll stay until I’ve blown the final monetary cartridge. If there is time and cash in the meantime, I’ll come and pay you a visit by some bargain-basement means, a free flight or boat or working as a doctor.

In this general plan, there are two highly variable factors that could change things one way or the other. The first is money, which, for me, is not of primary importance, but it does cut short stays and modify itineraries, etc. The second and more important is the political situation.

MY POSITION IS IN NO WAY THAT OF A DILETTANTE, FULL OF HOT AIR AND NOTHING ELSE. I HAVE TAKEN A DEFINITE POSITION IN SUPPORT OF THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT AND WITHIN IT, IN THE PGT GROUP, WHICH IS COMMUNIST. I ALSO HAVE CONNECTIONS WITH SOME INTELLECTUALS OF THOSE [SAME] LEANINGS WHO BRING OUT A MAGAZINE HERE, AND I WORK AS A DOCTOR IN THE UNIONS. THIS HAS PUT ME AT LOGGERHEADS WITH THE TOTALLY REACTIONARY MEDICAL COLLEGE. [Che’s emphasis] I can imagine everything you

will have to say and remark upon at this point, but at least you can't complain about me not being frank.

In the field of social medicine, and on the basis of my limited personal experience, I am working on a very pretentious book, which I think will take me two years' work. It is called *El función del médico en América Latina [The Role of the Doctor in Latin America]* and, so far, I only have the general plan and the first two chapters written. I think that, with a bit of patience and methodicalness, I can say something good.

A fearless hug from your proletarian nephew.

Important P.S.: Tell me what you're thinking of doing with the apartment and if it's possible to send books for you to keep for me. Don't worry, they aren't incriminating.

Letter to Tita Infante

Guatemala City
March 1954

[Written on paper bearing the stamp of the Production Development Institute of Guatemala]

In spite of everything, my beloved Tita, we are growing old.

Almost a year has passed since I left, and I haven't made much progress in anything, but I suppose you would like to hear about exotic adventures, so I'll tell you about my projects, adventures and misfortunes.

First, please forgive me for not having replied earlier. Several things happened that prevented me; I wanted to send you a chronicle of Guatemala but didn't have time; then I tried to track down a native writer who could do it for me, to publish somewhere over there, but that failed too, because the person who invented work came here to die many years ago. Still later, a magazine—I can't remember its name—asked me to write about what is happening in Guatemala, and I thought about sending you a copy, but I haven't written it yet and don't think I'll finish it soon, because I want to do it well.

I'm telling you all this because I think that Guatemala is a country that is worth knowing well and understanding thoroughly. I think that your fears are not unjustified, in view of the belligerent and, so far, victorious situation of the Republic. On March 1, in his annual message to Congress, President Árbenz announced in unequivocal terms that the Communist Party was cooperating with the government and that it was necessary for the government to defend the rights of the members of that political group against any kind of sanction.

In general, the communists are adopting a cautious position and, if it weren't for the outcry that the national press has raised against "meddling by foreign doctrines," they wouldn't be noticed. But they are the only political group in Guatemala that has approached the government to fulfill a program in which personal interests play no part (although there may have been a demagogue among its leaders), in sharp contrast to the three other party groups, that are veritable nests of intrigues—to such an extent that each of them has split into at least two antagonistic wings—and are so shameless that they have entered into pacts with the opposition to obtain the presidency of Congress (there is only one chamber).

For your information, if you don't know more about the problem than I do, the PGT [Guatemalan Workers' Party] has a lot of influence in sections of the three other parties, through elements that have leftist tendencies and are willing to help in the complete socialization of Guatemala—a very difficult task because, among other reasons, there is not much human quality in the revolution (I especially refer to the intellectual meaning of the term).

This is a country with a typical agricultural economy that left the almost "orthodox" fetters of feudalism behind only recently and which has only one crop of any weight on the world market: coffee. It is not excessively pessimistic to say that a considerable drop in the price of that product will topple the government unless emergency measures are taken, and this is what will happen if there is an international boycott backed by the gringos. I think that Guatemala's most difficult moment will come three years from now, when they must elect a new president. The names that are being tossed around don't inspire confidence for continuing the revolution in its present magnificent form. If you're interested and aren't afraid that it will cause

trouble for you there, I can send you some interesting publications, but I won't send them until I hear from you.

I thought I'd write you using just one sheet of paper, because I'm in quite a dire financial position and another sheet will raise the postage by 10 centavos, but I'd like to know some things:

First, how are you doing as a student now, in March (and in all the months that will pass before you answer me), and what are your plans—or lack thereof? I'm asking this because, in your letter, you said you were in a desperate situation that was very romantic and dangerous. I advise you, if you want to be a fatalist then be one in the positive sense and don't worry so much about the useless passing of the days or about failure of any kind; it's hard to stop the days passing, and that is what you want to do when you lament them one by one. If you look one or two years back, you'll see how much progress you've made. Forgive my doctoral tone.

Second, what about the members of your intellectual group and the magazine they founded, and what's Paz [a mutual friend] doing and how is he?

Third, what's Montenegro doing? I wrote him a letter, but he didn't reply; then I wrote Dicstein, and he didn't answer either, so I don't know anything about the tiny group you knew there in the doctors' den. When you decide to write me again, read my questions and answer them.

As for me, all of my efforts to work as a doctor have failed because of the inflexible spirit of the law, which was made to satisfy a group of oligarchs in all their prerogatives. They are the heirs of those who wanted the typically bourgeois revolution of '44 and who are now determined not to let any of the spoils get away from them for anything. As for my circumstantial occupations, I have drawn close to your work, with terrible results for the statistics: 98 percent of the children have hookworms or other intestinal parasites. Moreover, I've tried to break the backs of the poor *vinchucas* (or *Triatomas),* looking for *Trypanosoma cruzi* and *rangeli,* which are also found in great numbers. That's it as regards medicine.

Apart from that, I've done what I can not to starve to death, so that, in the end, I can deal the great blow. I think I'm going to Petén, a jungle area in Guatemala, hired as a nurse for a pittance, but I'll get deep into the woods with the workers who extract chicle, gum and wood. It's an area with a very old Mayan culture (Yucatán has a much more modern version of this

“lost in the jungle”), and I’ll have a chance to study tropical diseases of all kinds there. All that is needed—here, something’s always needed—is for the union to agree to my appointment, since it’s an important post in the boss union game. I hope to convince them that I’m not as terrible a person as they imagine (because the owner recommended me), and, if things turn out all right, the mosquitoes will be alighting on my body within a fortnight, and I’ll be communing with Mother Nature once again. The only thing that saddens me a little is to think that if I had done the same thing in Venezuela, I’d have earned $800 instead of $125. It’s tough to have so little money!

Tita, I send you fraternal thoughts and await news through the same consular means. I hope your afflictions will end soon.

Until I see you again,

Ernesto

Letter to his mother

Guatemala
June 20, 1954

Dear *vieja* [old lady],

This letter will reach you a little after your birthday, which might pass a little uneasily on my account. Let me say there is nothing to fear at the moment, but the same cannot be said of the future, although personally I have the feeling that I’m inviolable (inviolable is not the word, perhaps my subconscious is playing a bad joke on me).

To paint a picture of the situation: For the first time, five or six days ago, a pirate aircraft from Honduras flew over Guatemala, but did nothing. The next day and on successive days they bombed several Guatemalan military installations, and two days ago a plane machine-gunned the lower neighborhoods of the city, killing a two-year-old child. The incident has

served to unite all Guatemalans behind their government, and others who, like myself, have been drawn to the country.

Simultaneously, mercenary troops led by an ex-army colonel (dismissed from the army some time ago for treason) left Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, crossed the border, and have now penetrated quite deeply into Guatemalan territory. The government, proceeding with great caution to ensure that the United States cannot declare Guatemala the aggressor, has limited itself to protesting to Tegucigalpa and sending a full report of events to the UN Security Council, allowing the attacking forces to advance far enough that there would be no so-called border incidents. Colonel Árbenz certainly has guts; he's prepared to die at his post if necessary. His latest speech only reaffirmed this fact, which everyone already knew, bringing a measure of calm. The danger does not come from the number of troops that have entered the country so far, as this is minimal, or from the planes that have done no more than bomb civilian homes and machine-gun people; the danger lies in how the gringos (in this case, the Yankees) manipulate their stooges at the United Nations, since even the vaguest of declarations would greatly benefit the attackers.

The Yankees have finally dropped the good-guy mask Roosevelt had adopted, and now commit atrocities everywhere. If things reach the extreme where it's necessary to fight the planes and modern troops sent by the [United] Fruit Company or the United States, then a fight it will be. The people's spirits are very high, and the shameful attacks, along with the lies in the international press, have united even those who are indifferent to the government. There is a real climate of struggle. I have been assigned to the emergency medical services and have also joined the youth brigades to receive military instruction for whatever comes next. I don't think the tide will reach us, although we'll see what happens after the Security Council meets, which I think is tomorrow. At any rate, by the time this letter reaches you, you'll know what to expect in this regard.

For the rest, there's nothing much new. As the Argentine embassy is currently not functioning, I've received no fresh news since a letter from Beatriz and another of yours last week.

I'm told that at any minute I'll get the job at the health department, but the offices have been so busy with the commotion that it seems a little

imprudent to hassle them about my little job when they're busy with much more important things.

Well, *vieja,* I hope you had the happiest birthday possible after this troubled year. I'll send news as soon as I can.

Chau

[Unsigned]

Letter to his mother

Mexico
November 1954

Vieja, my *vieja*,

[…] Even Beatriz is engaging in reprisals, and those telegrams she used to send no longer come.

To tell you about my life is to repeat myself because I'm not doing anything new. Photography is bringing in enough to live on and there is really no basis for believing I might be able to give it up anytime soon, although I'm working every morning as a researcher in two hospitals. I think the best thing for me would be to slip into an unofficial job as a country doctor, somewhere near the capital. This would make it easier to devote my time to medicine for a few months. I'm doing this because I'm perfectly aware of how much I learned about allergies with Pisani. Now I have compared notes with people who've studied in the United States, and who are no fools with regard to orthodox knowledge, I think that Pisani's method is light years ahead. I want to get practical experience with the nuts and bolts of his systems so that I can land on my feet wherever that might be [...].

I'm slaving away here, busy every morning in the hospital and in the afternoons and Sundays I work as a photographer, while at night I study a bit. I think I mentioned I'm in a good apartment, I cook my own food and

do everything myself, as well as bathing every day thanks to the unlimited supply of hot water.

As you can see, I'm changing in this aspect, but otherwise I'm the same because I don't wash my clothes very often, and wash them badly when I do, and I still don't earn enough to pay a laundry.

The scholarship is a dream I've given up on, as I had thought that in such a large country all you had to do was ask for something and it was done. You know that I have always been inclined to make drastic decisions, and here the pay is great. Everyone is lazy, but they don't get in the way when other people get things done, so I've got a free rein either here or in the country where I might go next. Naturally, this doesn't make me lose sight of my goal, which is Europe, where I'm planning to go no matter what happens.

As for the United States, I haven't lost an ounce of hostility, but I do want to check out New York, at least. I'm not in the least worried about what might happen and know that I'll leave just as anti-Yankee as when I arrive (that is if I do get in).

I'm happy that people are waking up a bit, although I don't know what direction they are moving in. Anyway, the truth is that Argentina is as insular as you can get even though in general terms the picture we get from here seems to suggest that they are taking important steps forward and that the country will be perfectly able to defend itself from the crisis the Yankees are about to set off by dumping their surplus food […].

Communists don't have your sense of friendship but, among themselves, it is the same or better than yours. I have seen this very clearly and, in the chaos of Guatemala after the government was overthrown and it was every man for himself, the communists maintained their faith and compañeroship and they constitute the only group that continued to work there. I think they deserve respect and sooner or later I'll join the party. What mainly holds me back from doing so, for the moment, is that I'm desperate to travel around Europe and I couldn't do this if I submitted to a rigid discipline.

Vieja, until Paris.

Letter to his mother

Mexico
[late 1954]

Vieja, my *vieja*,

It's true, I've been too lazy, but the real guilty party, as always, is *Don Dinero* [Mr. Money]. Anyway, the end of this wretched financial year of 1954—part of which has treated me beautifully (like your face)—coincides with the end of my chronic hunger. I'm working as an editor at the Agencia Latina for 700 Mexican pesos a month (equivalent to 700 Argentine pesos), enough to live on with the added bonus that I work for only three hours, three days a week. I can therefore spend whole mornings at the hospital, where I am creating swellings using Pisani's method. […]

I'm still working as a photographer, but also spending time on more important things, like "studying," and some strange little things that pop up around the place. There's not much left over, but this December I hope to round it out to 1,000 and, with a bit of luck, we'll do a bit of photography at the end of the coming year (at *the beginning*, I meant to write). Contrary to what you might think, I'm no worse than the majority of photographers here, and the best among my compañeros, although yes, in this group you only need one eye to win the crown.

My immediate plans involve staying some six months or so in Mexico, which I find interesting and like a lot, and in this time apply, by the way, for a visa to visit "the children of the super power," as Arévalo calls them. If I get it, I'll go. If not, I'll see what other concrete plans I can make. I haven't abandoned the idea of slipping behind the Iron Curtain to see what's happening there. As you see, there's nothing new since earlier reports.

I'm very enthusiastic about the scientific research, which I'm capitalizing on because it won't last. I have two research projects on the run and may start on a third—all related to allergies—and very slowly I'm collecting material for a little book that will come to light (if ever) in a couple of years with the pretentious title, *The Role of the Doctor in Latin America.* I can speak with some authority on the subject, considering that, although I don't know much about medicine, I do have Latin America sized

up. Of course, apart from a general plan and three or four chapters, I've written nothing, but time is on my side.

With regard to the changes in my thinking, which is becoming sharper, I promise you that it will only be for a short time. What you are so afraid of can be reached in two ways: the positive one, when you convince someone directly, or the negative one, through disillusionment with everything. I came along the second path, only to be immediately convinced that it is essential to follow the first. The way that the gringos treat Latin America (remember that the gringos are Yankees) was making me feel increasingly indignant, but at the same time I studied the reasons for their actions and found a scientific explanation.

Then came Guatemala and everything that is difficult to recount. I saw how the object of one's enthusiasm was diluted by what those gentlemen decided, how a new tale of red guilt and criminality was concocted, and how the same treacherous Guatemalans set about propagating the story to get a few crumbs from the table of the new order. I can't tell you the precise moment I put reasoning aside and acquired something like faith, not even approximately, as the journey was long and there were many backward steps. […]

Letter to his mother

Mexico
September 24, 1955

Dear *vieja,*

This time it seems my fears have come true, and the enemy you've despised for so many years has fallen. The reaction here did not take long to register: all the daily papers and foreign dispatches jubilantly announced the fall of a sinister dictator; the North Americans breathed a sigh of relief for the $425 million they can now extract from Argentina; the bishop of Mexico City was gloating at Perón's downfall; and all the Catholic right wingers I've met in this country were visibly overjoyed. My friends and I, no. With

natural anxiety we followed the fate of Perón's government and the navy's threats to shell Buenos Aires. Perón fell as people of his stripe fall, without Vargas's posthumous dignity or Árbenz's energetic denunciations, when he named in minute detail those guilty of aggression.

Progressives here have defined the denouement that has occurred in Argentina as "another victory for the dollar, the sword and the cross." I know that today you will be happy and breathing the air of freedom. […]

Not long ago, I suggested in another letter to you that the military would never hand power over to civilians without a guarantee of its caste's domination. As things stand today, it will only hand over power to a government springing from the Democratic Party, which is to say, one of the recently founded Social-Christian parties, where I imagine [...] is active, a future honorable member of the Chamber of Deputies and perhaps, in the course of time, leader of the Argentine Party, yet to be founded.

Wherever you are, you'll be able to say whatever you feel like saying, with the absolute impunity that comes from belonging to the ruling class, although for your sake I hope you are the black sheep in the fold. In all honesty I confess that Perón's fall has left me deeply embittered, not on his account but because of what it means for the Americas. However much it pains you, and apart from the forced capitulations of recent times, Argentina was a champion for all of us who believe that the enemy lies to the north. To me, having lived through Guatemala's bitter hours, Argentina was a distant mirror image. When I saw that, together with the loyalist news (strange to call it that), Córdoba's voice was to be heard—theoretically an occupied city—I began to lose any clear picture of the situation. But afterwards, everything developed along exactly the same lines: the president resigned, a junta, posing as the resistance, began to negotiate but then collapsed, superseded by a military man with a little sailor by his side (the only variation with respect to Guatemala).

Then Cardinal Copello proudly addressed the nation, calculating how his business would fare under the new junta. The worldwide press—in this hemisphere—launched its well-rehearsed lines; the junta refused to give Perón a passport but declared freedom for everyone. People like you will believe this is the dawning of a new day; I assure you that Frondizi no longer does, since in the possible event that the Radicals come out on top, he won't be the one who achieves it but rather it will be Yadarola,

Santander or someone else with the blessing of the military serving the interests of the Yankees and the clergy. Perhaps there won't be any violence at first, because it will be exercised in a circle far removed from your own. [...]

The Communist Party will, in time, be put out of commission, and perhaps the day will come when even Papa might feel he made a mistake. Who knows what will have become of your wandering son in the meantime. Perhaps he will have come back to earth on his native soil (the only one possible), or have begun a life of true struggle [...].

Perhaps one of the bullets so common in the Caribbean will shorten my life (this is neither idle talk nor a concrete possibility, as there are plenty of bullets flying around here). Perhaps I'll just continue to wander around for long enough to gain a thorough education and take the pleasures I have assigned to myself for this life, before seriously devoting myself to pursuing my ideal. Life travels at a tremendous speed, and one cannot predict where one will be next year or why.

I don't know if you've received the formal news of my marriage and the arrival of an heir—from Beatriz's letter it would seem not. In that case, let me tell you officially, so you can let other people know: I married Hilda Gadea and we will soon be having a child.

I received the newspapers from Beatriz, which I'm very interested in. I'd like some kind of analysis about recent events, and above all a weekly copy of [the Argentine Communist Party's] *Nuestra Palabra.*

Chau,

Kisses to all the family. Hilda sends her greetings.

Letter to his parents

Mexico State Penitentiary
July 6, 1956

Dear *viejos* [old folks],

I received your letter (Dad) here in my new and exquisite mansion of Miguel Schultz [prison], along with a visit from Petit who informed me of your fears. To give you an idea, I'll give you an account of the matter.

Some time ago, quite a while ago, a young Cuban leader invited me to join his movement, a movement for the armed liberation of his country, and naturally, I accepted. In my task of providing some physical training for the bunch of guys who will be setting foot in Cuba some day, I spent the last months maintaining my cover as a teacher. On June 21 (when I had been away from my home in Mexico City because I was at a ranch on the outskirts), Fidel was arrested with a group of compañeros and the address we were staying at was found in the house, so we all fell into the net. I had with me documents accrediting me as a student of Russian, which was enough for them to regard me as an important link in the organization, and the news agencies that Dad admires so much began to holler all over the place.

This is a synthesis of what has happened. The future falls into two categories, the medium term and the immediate. With regard to the medium term, let me tell you now that my future is joined to that of the Cuban revolution. [I will] either triumph with it or die there. (This explains the somewhat enigmatic and romantic letter I sent to Argentina some time ago.) As for the immediate future, I have little to say because I don't know what is to become of me. I am in the judge's hands and it will be easy for them to deport me to Argentina unless I manage to obtain exile in some intermediate country, which I consider would be good for my political health.

In any case, I have to leave for my new destination, stay in this prison or leave it a free man. Hilda will go back to Peru, which now has a new government and has declared a political amnesty.

For obvious reasons, there will be less correspondence from me from now on, and besides, the Mexican police have the charming habit of confiscating letters, so don't write about anything except family matters or banalities. Give Beatriz a kiss and tell her why I'm not writing and not to worry about sending newspapers for the moment.

We're about to declare an indefinite hunger strike because of the unjustified detentions and the torture to which some of my compañeros were submitted. Group morale is high.

For the moment, keep writing to me at home.

If for any reason I think that I won't be able to write anymore, and then I end up among the losers, consider these lines as my farewell, maybe not very grandiloquent but sincere.

I have spent my life stumbling about seeking my own truth and somewhere along the way, with a daughter to perpetuate me, I have closed the cycle. From now on, I wouldn't consider my death as a frustration, or only in the sense that [Turkish poet Nazim] Hikmet did: "I shall take beneath the earth only the sorrow of an unfinished song."

Kisses for everyone,

Ernesto

Letter to his mother

Mexico
July 15, 1956

Vieja,

[…] I'm neither Christ nor a philanthropist, *vieja.* I'm exactly the opposite of a Christ and philanthropy looks [illegible] to me, but I fight for what I believe in, I fight with all the weapons at my disposal, and I try to lay out the other guy instead of letting myself get nailed to a cross or whatever. As for the hunger strike, you are totally wrong. We started it twice and the first time they freed 21 of the 24 detainees; the second time they announced that they would free Fidel Castro, the head of the movement, which will happen tomorrow, and if they do what they said, only two of us will be left in prison. I don't want you to believe, as Hilda suggests, that the two of us who remain have been sacrificed. We are simply the ones whose papers aren't in order and so we can't access the resources that our compañeros can. My plans are to leave for the nearest country that will grant me asylum, which might be difficult given the inter-American fame I've been lumbered with. From there I'll prepare myself for whenever my services are required.

I'm telling you yet again that it's likely I won't be able to write for a quite a while.

What really distresses me is your lack of understanding about all this and your advice about moderation, egoism, etc.—in other words, the most execrable qualities an individual could have. Not only am I not moderate, but I shall try never to be so. And if I ever see in myself that the sacred flame has become a timid little votive flicker, the least I can do is to vomit on my own shit. As for your appeal to moderate egoism, which means common and spineless individualism (the virtues of X.X.), I have to say that I've tried hard to eliminate him. I don't mean so much the unfamiliar craven type, but the other one, the bohemian, unconcerned about his neighbor, filled with a sense of self-sufficiency because of a consciousness, mistaken or otherwise, of his own strength. During this time in prison, and during the period of training, I totally identified with my compañeros in the struggle. I recall a phrase that I once thought was ridiculous, or at least strange, referring to such a total identification between members of a group of combatants, to the effect that the idea of "I" was completely subsumed in the concept of "we." It was a communist moral principle and naturally might look like doctrinaire exaggeration, but it was (and is) really beautiful to have this sense of "we."

(The splotches aren't tears of blood but tomato juice.)

You are deeply mistaken to believe that moderation or "moderate egoism" gives rise to great inventions or works of art. All great work requires passion and the revolution needs passion and audacity in large doses, things we have as collective humankind. Another strange thing I noted was your repeated mention of God the Father.

I really hope you're not reverting to the fold of your youth. I also warn you that the SOSs are to no avail: Petit got the wind up, Lezica dodged the issue and gave Hilda (who went there against my orders) a sermon on the obligations of political asylum. Raúl Lynch behaved well from afar, and Padilla Nervo said they were different ministries.

They would all help but only on the condition that I abjure my ideals. I don't think you would prefer a living son who was a Barabbas rather than a son who died wherever doing what he considered his duty. These attempts to help only put pressure on them and me.

But you have some clever ideas (at least to my way of thinking), and the best of them is the matter of the interplanetary rocket—a word I like.

Besides, there's no doubt that, after righting the wrongs in Cuba, I'll be off somewhere else; and it's also certain that if I were locked up in some bureaucrat's office or some allergy clinic, I'd be fucked. All in all, I think that this pain, the pain of a mother who's aging and wants her son alive, is a feeling to be respected, and I should heed it, and more than that, I want to attend to it. I would like to see you, not just to console you, but also to console myself in my sporadic and shameful homesickness.

Vieja, I kiss you and promise to be with you if nothing else develops.

Your son,

Che

Letter to his mother

Mexico
[Approximately October 1956]

Dear *Mamá*,

Your prickly son of a bad mother is not, on top of everything else, a good-for-nothing; he's like Paul Muni who said what he had to say in that tragic voice, and disappeared into the distance, his shadow lengthening to the tune of such an evocative soundtrack.

My current profession means I am always on the go, here today, there tomorrow, etc., and my relatives… well I haven't been to see them because of this (and also, I confess, because I probably have more in common with a whale than with a bourgeois married couple employed at the kinds of worthy institutions I would wipe from the face of the earth if I got the chance to do so. I don't want you to think that this is just a passing aversion; it's real mistrust. Lezica has shown that we speak different languages and have no common points of reference.)

I have given you this lengthy bracketed explanation because, after my opening line, I thought you might imagine I'm on the way to a becoming a *morfa-burgués*.[3] Being too lazy to start over and remove the paragraph, I embarked on a lengthy explanation that now strikes me as rather unconvincing. Full stop, new paragraph.

Within a month, Hilda will go to visit her family in Peru, taking advantage of the fact that she is no longer a political criminal but a somewhat misguided representative of the admirable and anticommunist party, the APRA.

I'm in the process of changing the focus of my studies: whereas previously I devoted myself for better or worse to medicine, and spent my spare time informally studying Saint Karl [Marx], this new stage of my life demands that I change the order. Now Saint Karl is primordial; he is the axis and will remain so for however many years the spheroid has room for me on its outer mantle. Medicine is more or less a trivial and passing pursuit, except for one small area on which I'm thinking of writing more than one substantive study—the kind that causes bookstore basements to tremble beneath its weight.

As you'll recall, and if you don't remember I'll remind you now, I was working on a book on the role of the doctor, etc., of which I only finished a couple of chapters that whiffed of some newspaper serial with a title like *Bodies and Souls.* They were nothing more than poorly written rubbish, displaying a thorough ignorance of the fundamental issues, so I decided to study. Again, to write it, I had to reach a series of conclusions that were kicking against my essentially adventurous trajectory, so I decided to deal with the main things first, to pit myself against the order of things, shield on my arm, the whole fantasy, and then, if the windmills don't crack open my nut, I'll get down to writing.

I owe Celia the letter of praise I will write after this if I have time. The others are in debt to me as the last word has been mine, even with Beatriz. Tell her that the papers arrive like clockwork and that they give me a very good idea of all the government's beautiful deeds. I cut out the articles carefully, following the example of my *pater,* and now Hilda is emulating her *mater.*

A kiss for everyone, with all the appropriate additions and a reply—negative or positive, but convincing—about the Guatemalan.

Now all that remains is the final part of the speech, which refers to the man, which could be titled: “What next?”

Now comes the tough part, *vieja*, the part I’ve never shunned and always enjoyed. The sky has not darkened, the stars have not fallen out of the sky, nor have there been terrible floods or hurricanes; the signs are good. They augur victory. But if they are wrong—and in the end even the gods can make mistakes—I think I’ll be able to say, like a [Turkish] poet you don’t know: “I shall take beneath the earth only the sorrow of an unfinished song.”

To avoid pre-mortem pathos, this letter will appear when things get really hot, and then you’ll know that your son, in some sun-drenched land in the Americas, is swearing at himself for not having studied enough surgery to help a wounded man, and cursing the Mexican government for not letting him perfect his already respectable marksmanship so he could knock over puppets with better results. The struggle will be with our backs to the wall, as in the hymns, until victory or death.

Another kiss for you, with all the love of a farewell that still resists being total.

Your son

---

1. Eduardo “Gaulo” García was a friend from Argentina.
2. Argentine slang meaning “pig.”
3. Argentine slang for a lazy bourgeois who does nothing but eat.

Books Read in Adolescence

The facsimiles reproduced here are a part of the personal archive Che Guevara left in Cuba. They allow for full appreciation of the formative stage in his life.

According to his own testimony, he began to write these notebooks on philosophy when he was 17, when he first set himself the task of studying philosophy. He noted in parentheses the nationality of the authors he was reading. Even when his handwriting was still evidently that of an adolescent, he maintained a methodological rigor that evolved as he read more. Che later summarized his first handwritten notebooks with typed versions during his stay in Mexico, eliminating what he considered irrelevant and making a greater emphasis on the study of Marxist economics.

Che also began preparing reading lists of books in his early youth. The lists included here reveal the depth and breadth of his intellectual curiosity.

Page 1:

Ameghino, Florentino, *Doctrinas y descubriminetos*

Alarcón, Pedro A. de (Spanish), *El Capitán veneno y el escándalo del sombrero de tres picos*

Alighieri, Dante (Italian), *La Divina Comedia*

Anuario socialista 1937

Arkady Anechenko (Russian), *Cuentos*

Alekhine, Alexander (Russian), *Mis mejores partidas de ajedrez* [My Best Games of Chess]

Amadeo, Octavio R. (Argentine), *Vidas Argentinas* (biographies)

Azorín (Spanish), *Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo*

Alarcón, Luis de (Spanish), *La verdad sospechosa*

Page 2:

Machiavelli, Niccolo (Italian), *El Príncipe* (sociology)

Manyot, *El buque fantasma*

John Milton (English), *El paraíso perdido (Epopeya mística)* [Paradise Lost] (2 volumes)

Moratín, Leandro F. de, *El sí de las niñas* (comedy)

Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino (Spanish), *Las cien mejores poesías líricas de la lengua castellana* [One Hundred of the Best Lyric Poems in Spanish]

Miró, Gabriel (Spanish), *Años y leguas. El libro de Sigüenza*

Marx, Karl (German), *El 18 brumario de Luis Bonaparte* [The 18th brumaire of Luis Bonaparte]

Malraux, André (French), *La condition humaine* (read in French)

Maeterlinck, Maurice (Belgian), *La vida de las abejas. La cida de las hormigas* [The Life of the Bee. The Life of the Ant] (science)

Page 3:

Arch, Schalom (North American), *El regreso de Jaim Lederer*

Saint Thomas of Aquinas (Italian), *La Ley* (philosophy); *Suma teológica* (religion)

Ambrose, St. (Italian), *Tratado de las mujeres* (philosophy)

[Illegible]

Aristotle (Greek)

Aymé, Marcel (French), *La Jument verte*

Aragón (French), *Amelién* (read in French)

Page 4:

Zola, Emile (French), *Trabajo* (2 volumes); *Lourdes* (2 volumes); *Verdad* (2 volumes); *Le debacle; Miserias humanas; Naná; La taberna; La cuestion humana; Germinal.*

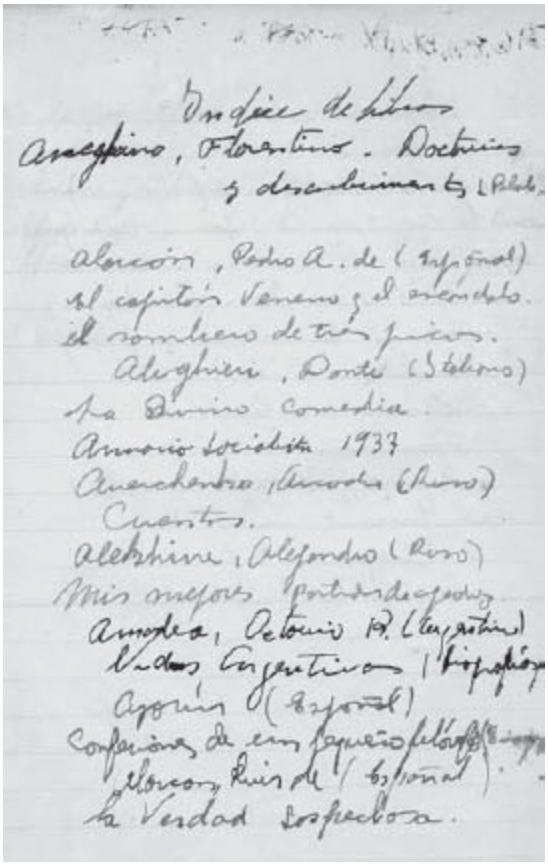
Zweig, Stefan (Austrian), *María Antoinette* (biography); *Magallanes* [Magellan] (biography); *Confusión de sentimientos; El candelabro enterrado; Amok; Tres maestros* (biography); *La tragedia de una vida* (biography); *Romain Rolland* (biography)

Zambrano, María (Cuban), *La agonía de Europa* (political philosophy)

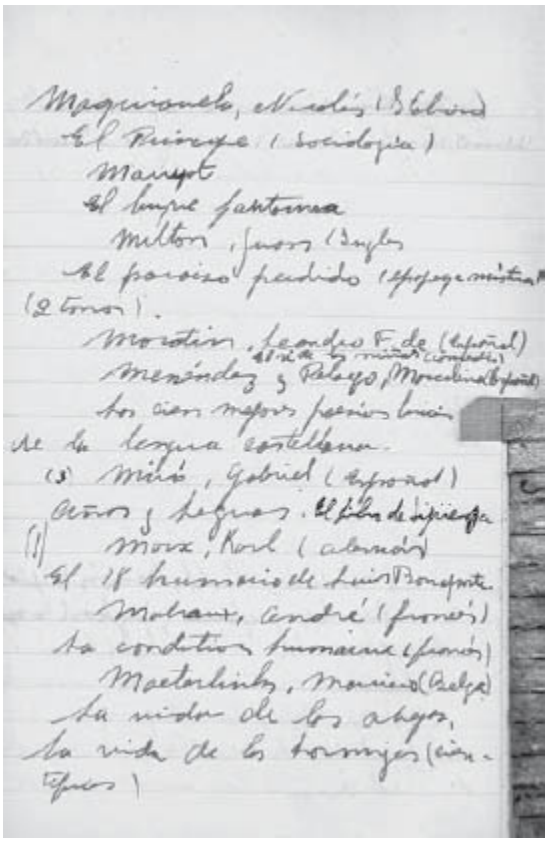
Page 5:

Verne, Jules (French), *La isla misteriosa* (2 volumes). *Las tribulaciones de un chino en China. Las aventuras de tres rusos y tres ingleses en el África austral. Los náufragos del Cynthia. Héctor Servadac. Un capitán de 15 años. Los hijos del Capitán Grant. La invasión del mar. Los piratas del Halifax. Las indias negras. La vuelta al mundo en 80 días. 5 semanas en globo. La jangada. La Estrella del Sur. Miguel Strogoff. Viaje al centro de la Tierra. Matías Sandorf (2 volumes). Norte contra Sur. Ante la bandera. La Isla de hélice. Familia sin nombre. 20 mil leguas de viaje submarino. Alrededor de la Luna. La agencia Thompson y Cía.*

Page 1:

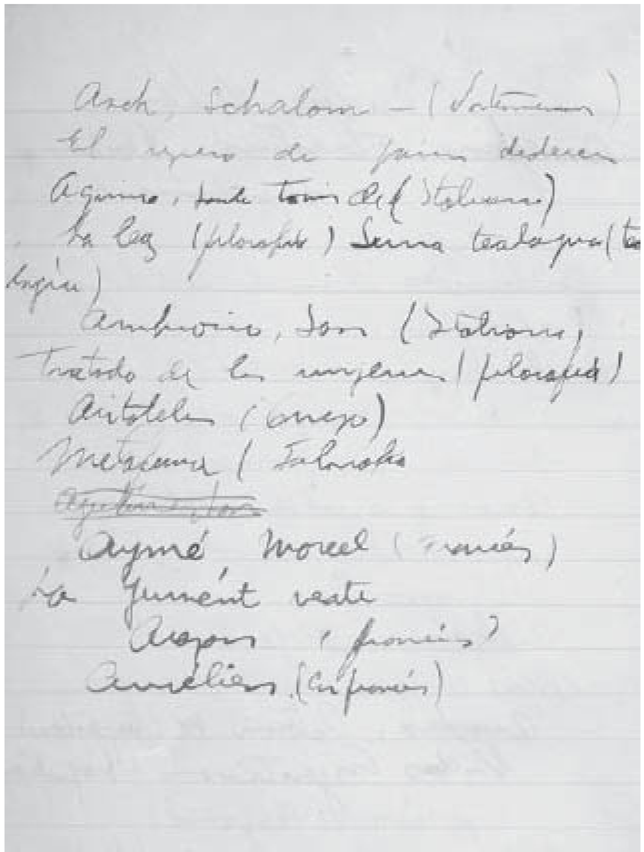


Page 2:

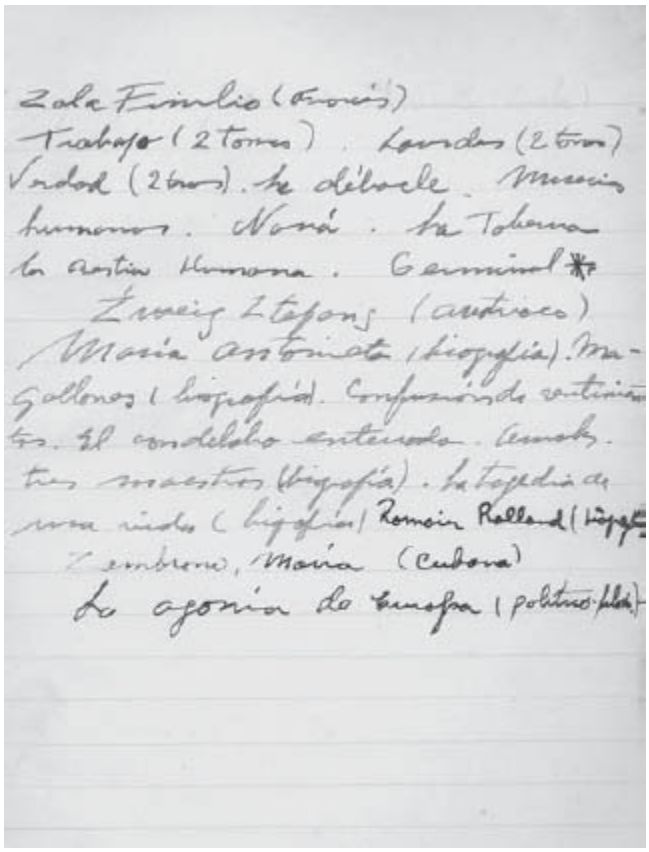


Maquiavelo, Nicolás (Italiano)
El Príncipe (Sociología)
Marryat
El buque fantasma
Milton, Juan (Inglés)
El paraíso perdido (epopeya mística)
(2 tomos).
Moratín, Leandro F. de (Español)
El sí de las niñas (comedia)
Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino (Español)
Los cien mejores poesías líricas
de la lengua castellana.
(3) Miró, Gabriel (Español)
Años y leguas. El libro de Sipiensa
(1) Marx, Karl (alemán)
El 18 Brumario de Luis Bonaparte
Malraux, André (francés)
La condition humaine (francés)
Maeterlinck, Mauricio (Belga)
La vida de las abejas,
La vida de las hormigas (cien-
tíficas)

Page 3:

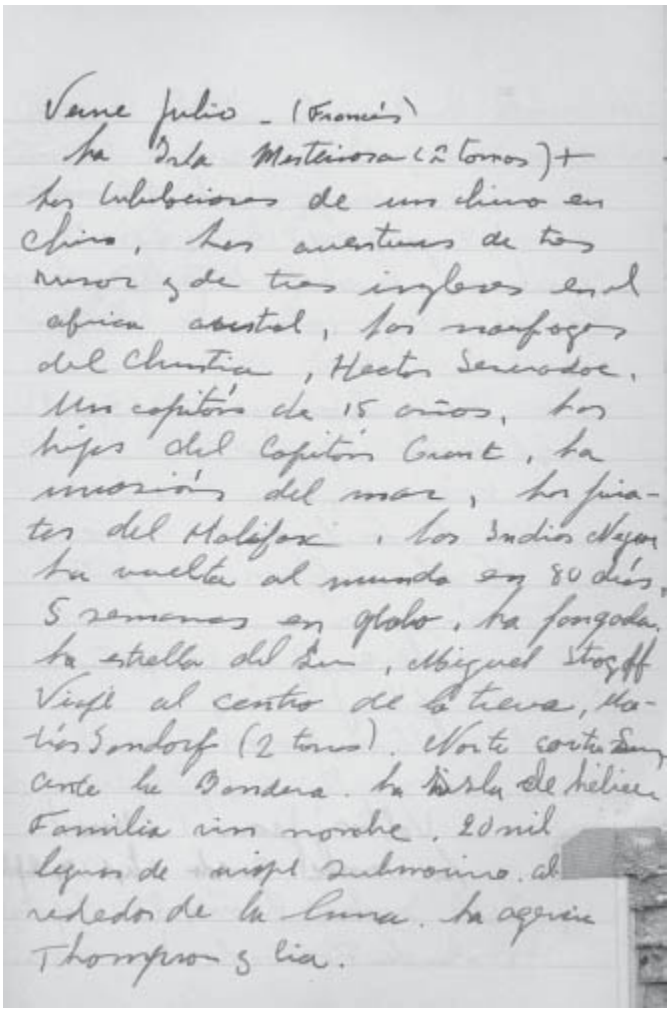

Asch, Schalom – ([illegible])
El [illegible] de Jaime [illegible]
Aquino, Santo Tomás de (Italiano)
La ley (filosofía) Suma teológica (teológica)
Ambrosio, San (Italiano)
Tratado de la virginidad (filosofía)
Aristóteles (griego)
Metafísica (Filosofía
~~Agustín, San~~
Aymé Marcel (Francés)
La Jument verte
Aragon (francés)
Aurélien (en francés)

Page 4:



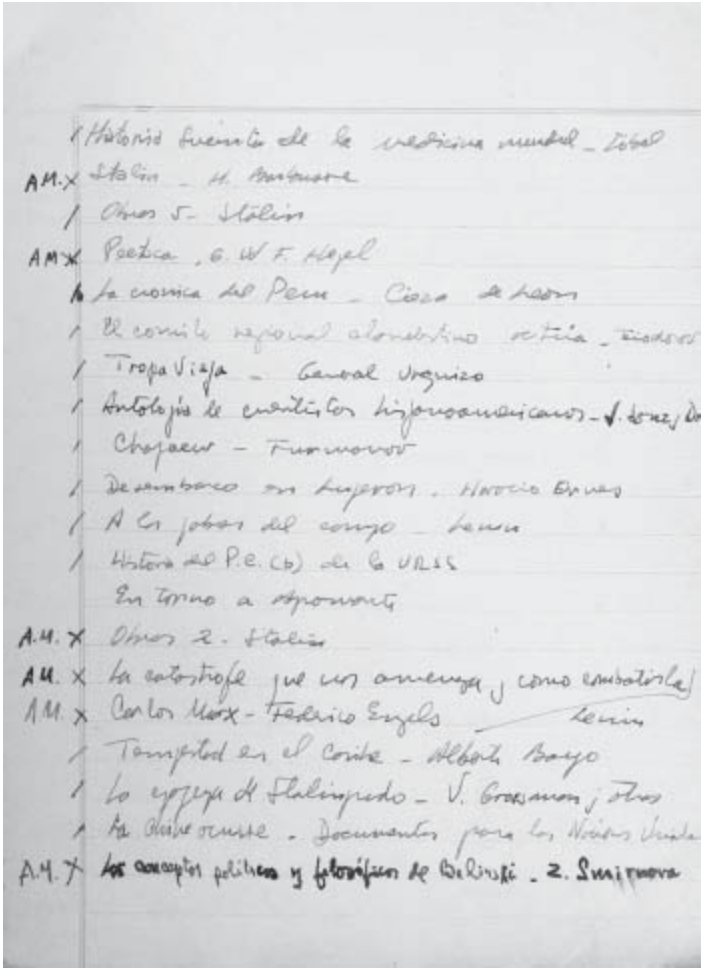
Zola Emilio (francés)
Trabajo (2 tomos). Lourdes (2 tomos)
Verdad (2 tomos). La débacle. Miserias
humanas. Naná. La Taberna
La Bestia Humana. Germinal *
Zweig Stefans (austriaco)
María Antonieta (biografía). Ma-
gallanes (biografía). Confusión de sentimien-
tos. El candelabro enterrado. Amales.
tres maestros (biografía). La tragedia de
una vida (biografía) Romain Rolland (biografía)
Zambrano, María (cubana)
La agonía de Europa (político-filosófica)

Page 5:



Verne Julio - (Francés)
La Isla Misteriosa (2 tomos) +
Las tribulaciones de un chino en
China, Las aventuras de tres
rusos y de tres ingleses en el
africa austral, Los naufragos
del Chuntia, Hector Servadac.
Un capitán de 15 años, Los
hijos del Capitán Grant, La
invasión del mar, Los pira-
tas del Halifax, Los Indios Negros
La vuelta al mundo en 80 días,
5 semanas en globo, La fangada,
La estrella del Sur, Miguel Stogoff
Viaje al centro de la tierra, Ma-
tías Sandorf (2 tomos). Norte contra Sur,
Ante la Bandera. La Isla de Hélice
Familia sin nombre. 20 mil
leguas de viaje submarino. Al
rededor de la Luna. La agencia
Thompson y Cia.

FACSIMILE 1



Reading List

FACSIMILE 1

Historia sucinta de la medicina mundial [Brief History of World Medicine], Löbel

Stalin, H. Barbousse

Obras [Works], Vol. 5, Stalin

Poética [Poetry], G.W.F. Hegel

La Crónica del Perú [Chronicle of Peru], Cieza de León

El Comité Regional Clandestino actúa [The Underground Regional Committee Acts], Fiodorov

Tropa vieja [Old Troop], General Urquiza

Antología de cuentistas hispanoamericanos [Anthology of Spanish American Short Story Writers], J. Sanz y Díaz

Chapaev, Furmanov

Desembarco en Luperon [Landing at Luperon], Horacio Orves

A los pobres del campo [To the Rural Poor], Lenin

Historia del P.C. (b) de la URSS [History of the CP[B] of the USSR]

En torno a Agramonte [About Agramonte]

Obras [Works], Vol. 2, Stalin

El catástrophe que nos amenaza y cómo combatirla [The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It], Lenin

Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels

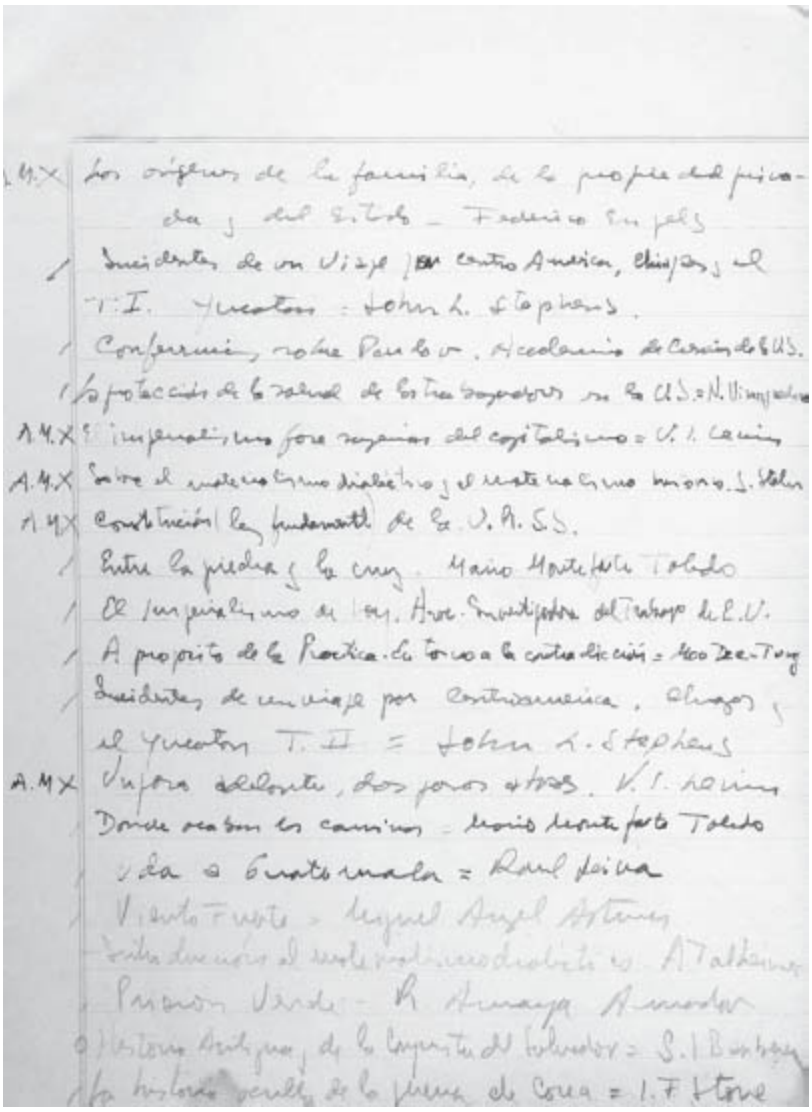
Tempestad en el Caribe [Storm in the Caribbean], Alberto Bayo

La epopeya de Stalingrado [The Epic of Stalingrad], V. Grossman et al

La Chine acusse [China Accuses], Documents for the United Nations

Los conceptos politicos y filosóficos de Belinski [The Political and Philosophical Concepts of Belinski], Z. Smirnova

FACSIMILE 2



FACSIMILE 2

Los origins de la familia, la propiedad privada y el Estado [The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State], Friedrich Engels

Incidentes de un viaje por Centroamérica, Chiapas y el Yucatán [Incidents of a Trip through Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán], Vol. I, John L. Stephens

Conferencias sobre Pavlov [Talks on Pavlov], Academy of Sciences of the USSR

La protección de la salud de los trabajadores en la URSS [Protection of Workers' Health in the USSR], N. Vinogradov

El imperialismo fase superior del capitalismo [Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism], V.I. Lenin

Sobre el materialismo dialéctio y el materialismo histórico [Dialectical and Historical Materialism], J. Stalin

Constitución (Ley fundamental) de la URSS [Constitution of the USSR]

Entre la piedra y la cruz [Between the Stone and the Cross], Mario Monforte Toledo

El imperialismo de hoy [Imperialism Today], Labor Research Association of the United States

A propósito de la práctica en torno a la contradicción [With Regard to Practice in Connection with Contradiction], Mao Tse-tung

Incidentes de un viaje por Centroamérica, Chiapas y el Yucatán [Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatán], Vol. II, John L. Stephens

Un paso adelante, dos pasos atrás [One Step Forward, Two Steps Back], V.I. Lenin

Donde acaban los caminos [Where the Roads End], Mario Monforte Toledo

Oda a Guatemala [Ode to Guatemala], Raúl Leiva

Viento fuerte [Strong Wind], Miguel Angel Asturias

Introducción al materialismo dialéctico [Introduction to Dialectical Materialism], A. Talheimer

Prisión verde [Green Prison], R. Amaya Amador

Historia antigua y de la conquista del Salvador [Ancient History and History of the Conquest of El Salvador], S.I. Banbere

La historia oculta de la Guerra de Corea [Hidden History of the Korean War, 1950-1951], I.F. Stone

PART TWO

LATIN AMERICA FROM WITHIN 1956–65

Introduction

This period of the development of Che Guevara's ideas about revolution in Latin America began with his participation in the armed struggle in Cuba and continued after its triumph on January 1, 1959. His experience grew and he became a respected socialist theoretician and an analyst of the socioeconomic situation in Latin America.

Revolutionary War in Cuba 1956–58

Articles

Che had many functions in his role as an educator and propagandist during the Cuban revolutionary war. He established *Radio Rebelde* [Rebel Radio] and the newspaper *El cubano libre* [The Free Cuban] in the Sierra Maestra in 1957.

This article, and the others in this section of this anthology, were written under the pen name *Francotirador* [Sharpshooter] and show his concise yet educational style, explaining recent national and international events to the average guerrilla, who may not have had much education or might even have been illiterate. This article, "How Cuban the World Seems to Us," written in a polemical style and published in *El cubano libre*, explores the question of communism and the necessary role of the struggle against brute force and injustice.

How Cuban the World Seems to Us

By Sharpshooter, with an unloaded gun

The voice of the distant world reaches the soil of our Sierra Maestra through the radio and newspapers, more explicit in describing events over there because it cannot relate the crimes that are committed here [in Cuba] every day.

Thus we learn about the disorder and deaths in Cyprus, Algeria, Ifni[1] and Malaya. All of them have common features:

a) Government forces "have inflicted numerous casualties among the rebels";

b) There are no prisoners;

c) The government reports "nothing new";

d) All the revolutionaries, whatever the name of the country or region, are receiving “undercover aid from the communists.”

How Cuban the world seems to us. It is the same thing everywhere. A group of patriots, armed or unarmed, rebels or not, is murdered and the armed oppressors chalk up points “after heavy fighting.” All witnesses are killed, hence the absence of prisoners.

The government never suffers casualties, and at times this is true since killing defenseless beings is not very dangerous. But there are also times when this is a tremendous lie and the S.M. [Sierra Maestra] can testify to this.

Finally, there is the hackneyed accusation they always trot out: “communists.” Communists are people who turn to arms when they become tired of so much wretchedness, wherever it occurs in the world. “Democrats” are people who kill those who are angry about this, be they men, women or children.

The whole world is Cuban and what is happening here is happening everywhere. Against brute force and injustice, the people will have the last word, and that word is victory.

Our Soul is Full of Compassion

By Sharpshooter, with an unloaded gun

The society for the protection of animals paraded six dogs before the UN building seeking clemency for their Siberian relative Laika, the dog that is flying in outer space.

Our soul is filled with compassion to think of the poor animal that will die gloriously in honor of a cause it does not understand.

But we have not heard that any philanthropic society in the United States is parading in front of that noble building to plead clemency for our peasants, who are dying in considerable numbers, machine-gunned by P-47 and B-26 aircraft, hit by shells or riddled with bullets from the soldiers’ M-15s.

Do the members of philanthropic societies know that these deaths are caused by arms supplied by their compatriots in the US government?

Or is it that, in the framework of political expediency, the life of a Siberian dog is worth more than those of a thousand Cuban peasants?

---

1. A Spanish province on the Atlantic coast of Morocco.

Interview

Che was interviewed several times in Cuba, by both Cuban and foreign members of the press. These excerpts are from Argentine journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti's interview with Che conducted in the Sierra Maestra mountains in April 1958, an interview which Masetti later included in his book *Los que luchan y los que lloran* [Those Who Fight and Those Who Weep], along with interviews with Fidel Castro and other leaders.

Interview by the Argentine Journalist,

Jorge Ricardo Masetti, April 1958

When I woke up, I was disappointed. I had slept peacefully until 5:00 a.m. and had not heard any gunfire at all. The government troops had made a brief incursion but returned at once to their barracks on discovering that Che was not at La Otilia and that he was preparing an ambush.

I had been eagerly listening for the sound of gunfire, lying in the semidarkness of the room, while Virelles, with his machine gun's safety catch off, promised himself a trip to Buenos Aires just to hear some tangos. Around 2:00 a.m., Sorí Marín and I stretched out on the only two mattresses available. Placed together, they could have accommodated three people, but not the five I found when I woke up. Virelles had gone to take up his post while Cantellops snored in an armchair. Llibre appeared, scratching himself at the foot of the bed, and told me in distress how he had spent the whole night trying to scratch a bunch of lumps that had mysteriously appeared on his stomach.

In a few minutes, what had looked like a dormitory became a dining room, office and infirmary. Everyone was standing now and the only thing

they were asking, whatever they were doing, was whether the Commander had arrived.

Guevara arrived at 6:00 a.m. While I watched admiringly as a group of lads busied themselves—doing something I had given up a long time ago, washing their faces—groups of sweaty rebels loaded up with their light packs and heavy weapons began to arrive from different directions. Their pockets were swollen with bullets and cartridge belts hung across their chests without even the protection of buttonless shirts.

They were the people who had set out to ambush Sánchez Mosquera's troops the previous night and were coming back exhausted, tired and still bristling with the desire to fight the troops of the detested colonel. Shortly afterwards, Ernesto Guevara arrived, riding a mule, his legs dangling, the curve of his back extended by the barrels of a Beretta and a rifle with telescopic lens, like two poles supporting the frame of his apparently large body.

As the mule approached I could see that, hanging from his waist, was a leather cartridge belt loaded with cartridges, and a pistol. From his shirt pockets two magazines protruded, while a camera hung from his neck and, from his chin, a few hairs that hoped to form a beard.

He calmly dismounted the mule, setting foot on the ground with his enormous muddy boots, and as he came over to me I calculated that he would be 178 centimeters tall. I noted that his asthma did not seem to inhibit him in any way.

Sorí Marín introduced us, watched by 20 soldiers who had never seen two Argentines together and who were somewhat disappointed to see that we greeted each other with a certain reserve.

The famous Che Guevara looked to me like a typical middle-class Argentine kid and also a rejuvenated caricature of Cantinflas.[1]

He invited me to breakfast with him and we began to eat, almost in silence.

The first questions, logically, came from him. And, logically, they were about the political situation in Argentina.

My answers seemed to satisfy him, and not long after we started talking, we realized that we agreed on many things and that really, we were not two dangerous characters. Soon we were chatting away quite freely, although

with the slight reserve typical of two Argentines of the same generation, and we began to use the familiar *tú* form.

One of the peasant soldiers, who was trying to listen in, made some humorous comment to Guevara about how funny the Cubans found our way of talking. Our mutual amusement united us almost at once in a less inhibited exchange.

Then I told him why I had traveled to the Sierra Maestra. The desire to clarify, especially for myself, what kind of revolution had been taking place in Cuba over the last 17 months; who was responsible; how was it possible to keep going for so long without the support of any foreign nation; why the Cuban people did not overthrow Batista once and for all if they really supported the revolutionaries; and dozens of other questions, many of which had already been answered on my journey to La Otilia where I had experienced at close quarters the terror in the towns and the gunfire in the mountains; seen unarmed guerrillas participating in suicidal ambushes to get hold of some weapon with which they could really fight; and listened to illiterate peasants describing, each in his own words, but all of them clearly, why they were fighting. I had realized that I was not in the midst of an army of fanatics that would accept anything from its leaders, but among a group of men who were aware that any deviation from the honest line they were so proud of would mean the end of everything and of the new rebellion.

But, in spite of everything, I was distrustful. I refused to let myself be totally carried away by my sympathy for the fighting peasants until I could submit to the severest scrutiny the ideas of the people who were leading them. I refused to admit once and for all that some Yankee consortium was not bending over backwards to support Fidel Castro, even though, on several occasions, planes given to Batista by the US aeronautical mission had fired on the places where I was.

My first specific question to Guevara, the young Argentine doctor turned hero Commander and creator of a revolution that had nothing to do with his own country, was:

“Why are you here?”

He had lit his pipe, and I my cigarette, and we settled down to a formal conversation that we knew would be a long one. He answered me in the calm way that the Cubans believe is characteristically Argentine, but which I would describe as a mixture of Cuban and Mexican mannerisms.

“I am here simply because I believe that the only way to rid the Americas of dictators is to overthrow them—helping to bring about their fall by whatever means necessary—the more direct the better.”

“Are you not afraid that your intervention in the internal affairs of a country that is not your own might be seen as interference?”

“First of all, I consider my country to be not only Argentina but the entire Americas. My country’s history is as glorious as that of Martí, and it is in his land precisely that I abide by his doctrine. Besides, if I give myself, everything that I am, if I offer my blood for a cause that I consider just and popular, if I help a people to rid itself of a dictatorship that does indeed permit the interference of a foreign power that backs it with arms, with planes, with money and with military instructors,

“I cannot concede that my commitment should be described as interference. No country has yet denounced US meddling in Cuban affairs and not a single newspaper has accused the Yankees of helping Batista to massacre his own people. But a lot of people are bothered about me. I am the interfering foreigner who is helping the rebels with his own flesh and blood. The people who supply arms for an internal war are not interfering. But I am!”

Guevara uses the pause to light his pipe, which has gone out. Everything he has said comes from what seem to be constantly smiling lips, without any stress on the words and in a totally impersonal manner. I, however, was totally serious. I knew that I had a lot of questions still to ask, but I already considered them absurd.

“And what about Fidel Castro’s communism?”

Again the smile was clearly discernible. He took a long draw on his pipe and answered me in the same matter of fact tone as before.

“Fidel is not a communist. If he were, he’d at least have a few more weapons. But this revolution is exclusively Cuban. Or, better said, Latin American. Politically, Fidel and his movement might be described as ‘revolutionary nationalist.’ Of course he is anti-Yankee inasmuch as the Yankees are antirevolutionary. But, in fact, we are not brandishing some kind of proselytizing anti-Yankeeism. We are against the United States”—he stressed this to give perfect clarity to the idea—“because the United States is against our peoples.”

I remained silent so that he would go on talking. It was terribly hot and the warm smoke of the fresh tobacco was as invigorating as the coffee we were drinking from big glasses. Guevara's "S"-shaped pipe hung there smoking and swaying in harmony with the rhythms of his Cuban-Mexican banter as he continued.

"The main target of this communist nonsense is myself. Every single Yankee journalist who has come to the Sierra has begun by asking me about my activities in the Communist Party of Guatemala—taking it for granted that I was active in the communist party of that country—simply because I was and am a sincere admirer of the democratic government of Colonel Jacobo Árbenz."

"Did you occupy any position in that government?"

"No, never." He talks on calmly without taking his pipe from his mouth. "But when the US invasion happened, I tried to get together a group of young men like myself, to fight the [United] Fruit Company mercenaries. In Guatemala it was necessary to fight and hardly anyone fought. It was necessary to resist and hardly anyone resisted."

I continued to listen to his account without asking further questions. There was no need. "From there I escaped to Mexico, as the FBI agents had already begun to detain people, ensuring that all those who might represent a danger to the United Fruit government were killed at once. In the land of the Aztecs I once again met up with some of the July 26 [Movement] people, whom I'd met in Guatemala, and became friendly with Raúl Castro, Fidel's younger brother. He introduced me to the leader of the movement when they had already begun to plan their invasion of Cuba."

Since his pipe had gone out again, he paused to light a cigarette and offered me one. In order to show that I still existed behind the dense curtain of smoke, I asked him how he had come to join forces with the Cuban revolutionaries.

"I passed one whole night talking with Fidel. By dawn I was the doctor of his future expedition. In fact, after the experiences of my travels throughout Latin America and the finishing off of Guatemala, it didn't take much to persuade me to join any revolution against a dictator, but Fidel impressed me as an extraordinary man. He faced and resolved the most impossible situations. He had the extraordinary faith that, if he left for Cuba, he was going to make it. That, once he arrived, he was going to fight.

And that, in the fighting, he was going to win. I shared his optimism. It had to be done, we had to fight, to make it happen. To stop crying about it and to fight back. And to demonstrate to the people of his country that they could trust him, because he did what he said he would do, and he spoke his famous words: 'In [19]56 we will be free or we will be martyrs,' announcing that before the year was out he was going to disembark somewhere in Cuba at the head of his expeditionary army."

"And what happened with the disembarkation?"

The conversation had now attracted more than 30 listeners. Sitting on the ground, with their weapons between their knees, their caps protecting their eyes from the reflections of the sun, "Che's men" smoked and listened attentively, without proffering a single word. A young, bearded doctor set and bandaged a finger perfectly, attending to nothing but what he was hearing. Llibre, a passionate admirer of the leaders of the revolution but a vigilant doctrinarian, analyzed each of Che's words and scratched at the pimples on his stomach with nails discolored by the clayey earth. Virelles listened as he slept. Guillermito, a beardless youth with very long hair, cleaned his rifle with the same attention that the doctor gave to setting the finger. From somewhere, mingling with the smell of tobacco, wafted that of the pork they were frying in a pan in the open air.

Guevara went on with his account, with a cigarette in his mouth and his legs comfortably stretched out.

"When we arrived, we were dispersed [by the army]. We had had an atrocious voyage on the cabin cruiser, the *Granma,* which carried the 82 members of the expedition plus the crew. A storm threw us off course and most of us were suffering from seasickness. Our water and food had run out and, to make matters worse, when we reached the island, the boat became stranded in the mud. They were shooting at us without let up, from the air and the coast and, before long, only half of us were left alive, or half-alive if you consider the state we were in. All in all, out of the 82, only 12 of us were left with Fidel. And, at the beginning, our group was reduced to seven because the other five had scattered. This was all that was left of the invading army of the audacious July 26 Movement. Lying there on the ground, without being able to fire for fear of giving ourselves away, we waited for Fidel's final instructions, while we could hear the navy firing and the bursts of the air force machine guns in the distance."

Guevara let out a short laugh as he remembered.

“What a guy, this Fidel: you know, under cover of the noise of the machine guns he stood up and said to us, ‘Listen how they’re shooting at us. They’re terrified. They’re scared of us because they know we’re going to finish them off.’ And, without another word, he picked up his gun and his pack and led our little column away. We were looking for Turquino Peak, the highest and most inaccessible mountain in the Sierra Maestra, where we established our first camp. The peasants watched us go by without any show of friendliness. But Fidel didn’t flinch. He greeted them with smiles and only took a few minutes to start up a more or less cordial conversation. When they refused to give us food, we continued our march without protest. It didn’t take long for the peasants to realize that these bearded ‘rebel’ guys were exactly the opposite of the troops that were looking for us. While Batista’s army laid their hands on everything they fancied in the peasants’ huts—including the women, of course—Fidel Castro’s people respected the peasants’ property and paid generously for everything they consumed. We noted, not without surprise, that the peasants were disconcerted by our behavior. They were used to the treatment meted out by Batista’s army. They were slowly becoming real friends and, as we had more encounters with groups of government troops in the mountains, many expressed their desire to join us. But these first ambushes when we were seeking arms began to bother the troops, and they marked the start of the most ferocious wave of terrorism imaginable.

“Every peasant was considered a potential rebel and was killed. If they found out that we had gone through a particular zone, they burned down the huts that we might have reached. If they came to any property and didn’t find any men there because they were working or in the village, whether they imagined or not that they had joined our ranks, which were swelling every day, they shot everyone who remained at home. The terrorism practiced by Batista’s army was, without a doubt, our most effective ally at that time. It was the most brutally eloquent demonstration for the peasant communities that it was necessary to bring down the Batista regime.”

The sound of a motor claimed the attention of us all.

“Plane!” some of them shouted and everyone ran inside La Otilia. In a matter of seconds, the animals’ harnesses and the packs disappeared from

the coffee drying floor, and nothing could be seen around the camp except the sun-bleached trees, the cement drying floor and the red clay track.

A dark gray plane appeared from behind the ridge and made two wide sweeps over La Otilia, quite high, but without firing a shot. Minutes later it disappeared.

We came out of the house as if we had been locked up for hours.

I reminded Guevara of my intention of meeting Fidel as soon as possible, to record my report and then return to the transmitter plant to try to get it directly to Buenos Aires. In a few minutes they found me a guide who knew the Jibacoa area, where Fidel was probably operating, and a more or less strong mule without too many sores.

"You'll have to leave now," Guevara told me, "to reach the first camp before it gets too late, and tomorrow morning you go on to Las Mercedes. They might be able to tell you there where to find Fidel. With luck, you'll locate him in three days."

I mounted the mule and said goodbye to them all, arranging to meet Guevara in La Mesa some days later when I would return with my recorded report. I gave Llibre several rolls of exposed film and two recorded tapes so that he could keep them for me in the transmitter plant.

It was about midday and the pork was frying again now that the plane scare was over. The smell of fat that had previously made me so nauseous, now seemed delicious. The incredibly pure Sierra Maestra air was a great tonic for my stomach. Sorí Marín brought me half a dozen bananas that this time—and I never understood why—were called *malteños.*

Guevara urged the guide to be very careful as we approached Las Minas.

"He's the first compatriot I've seen in ages," he shouted, laughing, "and I want him to survive at least until he can send the report to Buenos Aires."

"Chau," I called from the distance.

And about 30 voices answered, laughing and shouting, as if it were the funniest farewell they could imagine.

We branched off the path leading to La Otilia and crossed a coffee field. The beans were still green and gave off the pure aroma of fresh plants. While I was distracted—trying to peel *malteños* some 40 centimeters long—the branches sometimes tried to snatch my cap. But the proximity of Las Minas, although it didn't remove my appetite, captured my attention much

more than the question of guiding the mule or peeling the bananas. My guide, with a nickname more fitting for a leggy French showgirl than for a bearded and almost toothless peasant (“Niní”), was a few meters ahead, mounted on a small, short-legged mule. Suddenly he dismounted and slid noiselessly toward me over the cushion of leaves. Before he got to me I had also dismounted and we moved away from the animals at once. The sound of branches hitting something like the steel helmet of a soldier could now be heard clearly. Niní released the safety catch of his pistol.

“Hey, *compay!”* he suddenly shouted.

A peasant advanced with difficulty through the coffee trees trying, as much as he could, to prevent the branches from hitting the light rectangular box of white wood that he carried on his shoulder.

“What’s news?” he replied, gasping for breath. […]

---

1. Mexican comic film actor, famous for his portrayal of the impoverished Mexican peasant.

1959

Article

This article by Che Guevara was published in *Humanismo* magazine (September-October 1959) after Che toured the Bandung Pact[1] countries in 1959.

Latin America from the Afro-Asian Perspective

For Asians, to speak of our unredeemed Latin America is to speak of an ill-defined region about which they know as little as we do about that immense part of the world whose desire for freedom found its appropriate means of expression in the Bandung Pact.

In the past, they knew nothing about Latin America except, perhaps, that it was a huge sector of the world inhabited by dark-skinned natives with loincloths and spears, where someone named Christopher Columbus had arrived more or less at the same time that someone else named Vasco de Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope and ushered in a terrible period in the cultural, economic and political life of those peoples—one that lasted for centuries.

Nothing specific has been added to that knowledge except for something called “the Cuban revolution,” which is practically an abstract concept for them. For that distant world, Cuba is an abstraction which stands for an awakening, the base from which that mythological being called Fidel Castro arose. Beards, long hair, olive-green uniforms and some mountains whose exact location is unknown, in a country about which they know only its name—and not all of them even know it’s an island—that is what the Cuban revolution and Fidel Castro are. And those bearded men, “Castro’s men,” who come from an island that can’t even be found on the map, moved by the magical pull of a mythological being, stand for the new

Latin America, which draws them from their knees—numbed from so much kneeling—to their feet.

Now, the other Latin America is disappearing—the one in which unknown men work in miserable conditions in tin mines, a material in the name of which the Indonesian tin miners are being exploited to death; the Latin America of great rubber plantations in the Amazon, where men plagued by malaria produce rubber further lowering the rubber workers' wages in Indonesia, Ceylon and Malaya; the Latin America of fabulous oil deposits, because of which the workers in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Iran earn less; the Latin America of cheap sugar, which means that Indian workers earn less for doing the same bestial work under the same inclement sun of the tropics. That Latin America is disappearing.

Different, and still surprised by their audacity in wanting to be free, the people of Africa and Asia are beginning to look beyond the seas. Doesn't that other storehouse of grains and raw materials also have a culture inhibited by the colonial power and millions of people with the same simple, deep desires as the Africans and Asians? Doesn't our brotherhood challenge the breadth of the seas, the barriers of different languages and the absence of cultural ties, to bring us together in an embrace of compañeros in struggle? Should we consider ourselves more the brothers of the Argentine workers, the Bolivian miners, the employees of the United Fruit Company and the Cuban sugarcane-cutters than of the proud descendants of Japanese samurai who are now Japanese workers? Rather than an isolated instance, does not Fidel Castro represent the vanguard of the Latin American peoples in their growing struggles for freedom? Isn't he a man of flesh and blood? A Sukarno, a Nehru, a Nasser?

The people in the freed nations are becoming aware of the enormous hoax that was worked on them, in which they were convinced that they were racially "inferior." They know they could be mistaken, too, in their assessment of peoples in other continents.

Cuba has been invited to send representatives to the new conference of Afro-Asian peoples. They will show the august meeting of their Afro-Asian brothers the truths and the pain of Latin America. Their participation is no happenstance event; it is the result of the historic convergence of all the oppressed peoples in this hour of liberation. They will go to say that it is true that Cuba exists and that Fidel Castro is a man, a popular hero, not a

mythological abstraction. But they will also explain that Cuba is the first sign of Latin America's awakening, not an isolated event.

When they tell of all the unknown heroes of the masses, all the nameless people who have died on the great battlefield of this region; when they speak of the Colombian "bandits" who fought in their homeland against the alliance of the cross and the sword; and when they speak of the Paraguayan *mensús* who, unwittingly representing the oil interests of Britain and the United States, fought against the Bolivian miners, each side killing off the other, they will see astonished looks—not the looks people have when they are told something that is unheard of, but looks showing that they are hearing a new account the development and consequences of which are identical to those of the old colonial story that they have experienced and suffered from over the course of centuries of ignominy.

Latin America is taking shape and acquiring a sense of itself. Latin America—represented by Cuba and Fidel Castro (a man who, with his guerrilla beard, personifies an entire region)—is becoming more real and alive. In the African and Asian imagination, it is populated with real men and women who are suffering and struggling for the same ideals they are.

With my new perspective, I see the full value of what I participated in, from the sublime moment when there were only 12 of us left, and I see that the small differences among us which were exaggerated have dissolved, showing the true importance of that Latin American people's feat. With this perspective, I treasure the childlike, naive and spontaneous gesture of men from far-off lands who touch my beard and ask in foreign languages, "Fidel Castro?" adding, "Are you members of the guerrilla army that is leading the struggle for Latin America's freedom? Are you, then, our allies from the other side of the ocean?" And I tell them, and all of the hundreds of millions of other Africans and Asians who, like them, are advancing toward freedom in this new and uncertain nuclear age, "Yes, we are." I am another brother, one of the multitude of brothers in that part of the world who are waiting with infinite eagerness for the moment when we can consolidate the bloc that will destroy the anachronistic presence of colonial rule once and for all. […]

1. The Bandung Pact was the initial step toward the creation of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries.

Speech (1959)

Speech to the College of Medicine, Havana

This speech is one of the first Che Guevara gave in Havana just weeks after the triumph of the revolution. It is important because it develops his earlier work on the role of doctors in social transformation and emphasizes the legacy of José Martí. It was presented to a meeting held in his honor, sponsored by the College of Medicine, on January 16, 1959.

I haven't brought a written speech that I'm hiding under my arm like the guy who didn't want to be unprepared and so brought one just in case, so he wouldn't have to decline the undeserved honor of being asked to address the meeting. I came here to fulfill my rather neglected duty as a doctor and to greet you—that's all.

Really, I'm not very accustomed—I'm not at all accustomed—to being among those presiding over or on the dais of a meeting of professionals, and I think that, if my life had followed the channels of science, I still wouldn't be here. The fact that I've been invited to be here to say a few words shows that warriors are still considered important in Latin America.

I don't think there is anything special about a foreigner's having come to fight for Cuba. Martí lived, spoke and taught in Cuba, and his main goal was to unite Latin America. I've never felt myself to be a foreigner, either in Cuba or in any of the other countries in which I've traveled, and I've had a rather adventurous life.

I felt like a Guatemalan in Guatemala, like a Mexican in Mexico and like a Peruvian in Peru; now, I feel like a Cuban in Cuba—and, naturally, I also feel like an Argentine, both here and everywhere else, because it's a part of my personality: I can't forget *mate* and Argentine BBQs.

Now let's talk about something more important: the contribution that doctors can make to our revolution—not what you've already done, which

everybody acknowledges, for your profession may well be the one that has given the most blood and men to the revolution. (I can't remember any of our columns that didn't have the services of at least one doctor.)

As a doctor who has always been concerned about social questions, I think this is the time to make substantial contributions in order to radically change the health conditions that prevail in Cuba, as in all other nations.

During my travels through other Latin American countries, I saw that health was one of the most backward spheres. In the Sierra Maestra mountains, there was no health care at all.

Many of the guys told me while we were in Mexico that Cuba was different, that Cuba was not like Mexico—where, in reality, there is absolutely no health care outside the capital—but I've seen that health care is completely unknown in many parts of Cuba, too, although the Sierra Maestra seems to be unrelated to the rest of Cuba. Later, I saw that the picture was completely different in the cities and more prosperous agricultural areas, and even in other rural areas.

I think that what we must do now, in these days of victory and peace, is to prepare to struggle honestly and ardently so that the Cuban health care system takes an important step forward, providing clinics and services in all those areas without them and to modernize many others.

I haven't had a chance to visit the research centers and many of the health services here in the capital yet, but I'm aware that there is still a lot to do. I'm beginning the critique here, simply because I consider myself a Cuban and think that I have not only the right but also the duty to call attention to anything I find that is not working properly.

I think it's time to start thinking seriously. Just a few minutes ago, I was telling Dr. del Valle and Dr. Rodríguez about the new direction that medicine must take in Cuba. Since we've created a revolution that may be history-making and that marks a new step forward in the Latin American peoples' struggles for liberation, we should complete it in all spheres and courageously carry it to social medicine, advancing as far as possible.

I'm simply calling your attention to the issue, not laying down any guidelines—because I don't have the training to do that. Now, I ask you to forgive me for having bitten off more than I can chew and for having spoken about things I should perhaps have left alone. Perhaps I should have talked about things related to the guerrilla struggle, which I know well—

not medical topics—but, since I was invited by the College of Medicine, I have taken the opportunity to say these things, because I wanted to call the compañeros' attention to these issues.

Interview (1959)

Even though this is only a version of the interview—the original transcript has been lost—it has been included in this anthology because it clearly presents Che Guevava's analysis of the economic situation in Latin America and questions the role of the International Monetary Fund.

Interview for Radio Rivadavia, Argentina

November 3, 1959

In a report recorded in Havana and broadcast here tonight by Radio Rivadavia, Ernesto Che Guevara, commander of the Cuban Revolutionary Army, stated that, "few government leaders have been able to go to the United States and return with a clear conscience, as our Prime Minister Fidel Castro has done."[1]

Commander Guevara made this statement about Fidel Castro in reference to the difference in conduct "one observes in movements before and after coming to power. Once one is in power," Guevara added, "the great difficulty is in upholding standards of behavior, in the face of the inevitable attacks by foreign monopoly capitalism and economic pressures.

"If these standards could be maintained in Latin America, enough political cohesion would be achieved to effectively defend its position in the international field, like the stance that has been adopted by the Afro-Asian countries in adhering to the so-called Bandung Pact. Despite huge differences in their social systems, they have gone from practically socialist systems to international sultanates, sustaining a cohesion that is enviable for our countries of the Americas."

Referring to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Commander Guevara stated, “If it is [to be considered to be] an element of liberation for Latin America, I believe that it should have demonstrated that. Until now, I have not been aware of any such demonstration. The IMF performs an entirely different function: precisely that of ensuring that capital based outside of Latin America controls all of Latin America.”

Guevara said that the IMF “knows that in a case of aggression against us, we shall respond in the measure in which they know we do things. The interests of the IMF represent the big international interests that today seem to be established and concentrated in Wall Street.

“The complex problem of the deficit in the balance of trade,” he said, “can be resolved by diversifying production and diversifying foreign trade relations. My trip to the countries of Africa and Asia is in accordance with the decision of the Cuban government to seek new markets all over the world. We aim to trade with countries everywhere—there are no ideological barriers in trade.”

Guevara also said, “The only thing that can concern Cuba in foreign countries is what products they have to exchange for Cuban products and under what conditions they wish to do so.”

He announced that during his foreign tour, and afterwards, he had signed or was about to sign trade agreements with a number of countries and that there were possibilities for Cuba to trade with Yugoslavia, India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Denmark and Pakistan.

He indicated that the countries he visited are in political-social circumstances similar to those of Cuba and that “they are fighting for their freedom, because their markets and foreign trade are controlled by colonial interests.

“They need,” he added, “fundamental agrarian reform, and then they need to struggle to industrialize. Cuba is aligned with them in taking the same road toward a total recovery of the country.”

He reiterated that Cuba is considering developing trade relations with the countries of Europe, both East and West, “since we believe that trade is one thing and ideological problems are quite another.”

He noted that Cuba is interested in focusing on trade with other countries of the Americas, and that preference would be given to any negotiations undertaken with a Latin American country over those with

countries of other continents. After saying that economic definition leads directly to political definition, Commander Guevara stated that, “the Cuban sectors opposing the present revolutionary government are capitalist parasites directly affected by the government’s work, among them the big landowners.”

He mentioned a large US-controlled estate of 150,000 hectares—Atlántico del Golfo—noting that such interests are related to a certain type of US landowning capital that “in some cases have financed the coup attempts we have seen of late. We are in no doubt,” he added, “that there will be more of them in future.”

Referring to popular support for the revolutionary government of Cuba, Guevara said it “comes from all sectors with something to gain in economic and moral terms: the peasants and workers, basically, and middle-class sectors, including all kinds of professionals and honest traders.”

“People,” he added, “are nothing but the representation of an ideology, a way of thinking, and this way of thinking must be sustained by a broad mass base. There are movements in Latin America that are able to create a nexus of solidarity and support for any position that means rejecting the economic and political subjugation of Latin America.

“General Cárdenas in Mexico, Larrazábal in Venezuela, Palacios in Argentina, De Aranha in Brazil, and others,” he added, “meet these conditions to a greater or lesser degree.”

Commander Guevara indicated that “the structure of any Latin American movement that might have the same basic features, which would be so easy to attain among peoples with a similar economic structure and a similar political orientation with regard to what the masses desire, would be a very salutary measure in the development of Latin America’s future struggle for her complete liberation.”

He said, “The magnificent speech given by General Cárdenas in Havana on July 26 this year has contributed to consolidating relations between Cuba and the state of Mexico.”

Finally, the commander said, “The fact that there is not a single stalk of wheat in all of Cuba is one basis for discussions that could lead to a trade agreement being reached between Argentina and Cuba.”

He clarified that he has not renounced his Argentine citizenship despite the fact that the Cuban government has bestowed upon him Cuban

citizenship “from birth” and added that it is difficult for him to travel to the land where he was born, “because the intensity of the work carried out by members of the revolutionary government makes it practically impossible to leave the country unless it is for some particular goal, like, for example, our trip to the East.”

---

1. Fidel Castro toured the United States in April 1959.

Letter (1959)[1]

Letter to Mrs. María Teresa Díaz de Dicon

La Cabaña Military Department
Havana, June 1, 1959

Mrs. María Teresa Díaz de Dicon
Bouchard Hotel
Bouchard 487
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dear Mrs. Díaz:
I was very glad to receive your letter, to which I am now replying.

We must meet Cuba's needs, so we cannot turn down anybody who offers services which may be of great use to the revolution.

Thus, I don't foresee any problems with your coming here, where you will be welcomed, but I would like to make it clear that all positions are awarded on the basis of merit, and you will have to accept this principle.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ernesto Che Guevara
Commander in Chief
La Cabaña Military Department

1. Some of Che Guevara's letters to a variety of individuals in many countries have been included in this anthology because they show the range of topics broached and reveal his precise and incisive style.

1960

Articles

Using the same pen name *Francotirador* [Sharpshooter] he had used in the Sierra Maestra paper *El cubano libre,* Che wrote a series of brief articles in 1960 for the armed forces magazine, *Verde Olivo* [Olive Green], to help readers to understand the increasingly hostile relationship between Cuba and the United States and its acolyte governments in Latin America, a conflict that began almost immediately after the revolution.

Regional Disarmament and Other Acts of Submission

By Sharpshooter

Some Latin American peoples are so institutionalized that they have almost forgotten the word “revolution” and sometimes put up with a more or less organized fraud or a more or less shameless mocking of the people’s ambitions for quite some time. In general, they have very serious, cautious governments that have profound respect for the Pan-American doctrine (the one that began with Monroe, that president who wanted to grab all of Latin America for the United States).

These cautious Latin American gentlemen, who respect freedom of the press and freedom of expression and all the international agreements that have ever been signed to defend Latin America against aggression by terrible foreign powers, have suddenly found that there is no need to fight in Latin America. We already have everything we need: we live in heavenly peace, the peasants have land, the workers have wonderful work hours and

marvelously good pay, the capitalists have moderate profits and there are no bullies or monopolies, so—why do we need weapons in such a paradise?

True, a demon called “international communism” has been hatched in other continents which sometimes captivates the uncultured masses and incites them to say they are hungry, to make ridiculous demands about increased wages or to ask for land—trying to take it away from its legitimate owners, the holders of large estates.

But all Latin American countries have a guardian angel—the United States—which looks after their freedom and sovereignty. It not only has the right but also the duty to arm itself to the teeth and shoot into the sky all kinds of test missiles (though many of them, perhaps contaminated by the spirit of evil, refuse to remain in the sky and return to crash on earth); this is an attribute that the kings of monopolies reserve for themselves. The fundamental right, naturally—which is also theirs—is to protect us against “international communism.” Every time there is a Fidel Castro who raises the flag of the redemption of the poor, an investigation must be made quickly to discover the communist who is behind this specter and eliminate them.

The thesis of Latin American disarmament was raised in distant Chile, whose president is identified with Eisenhower’s “peace” policy; it was also raised during the visit of Brazilian presidential candidate Janio Quadros, when some half-curious, half-ill-intentioned journalists in his group asked how much we Cubans spent on weapons, and what for. Now, one of the most “cautious”—if not the most cautious—of all the bowers and scrapers in the region is sounding the alarm, and the uproar is terrible.

What with the democratic instrument of the OAS and the tremendous declarations giving the kings of monopolies an exclusive monopoly over the region’s defense, sometimes we feel like Little Red Riding Hood telling her grandmother—those in charge of defending Latin America—“What big teeth you have, Granny!” At other times, however, on seeing so much dishonor, so much treason disguised by circumspection and so many despicable individuals bowing and scraping in the halls of Washington, we feel like shouting with all our strength, “WHY SHOULD WE GET ON OUR KNEES?”

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, April 24, 1960.

Don’t Be Stupid, Buddy, and Other Warnings

By Sharpshooter

This admonition is a general one, not aimed at any recipient in particular. But, if the shoe fits… Just suppose (an example without any geographic or historical definition)—just suppose that a military man should cross the border from a country whose president—just suppose—has been in Washington. . .“talking.” Just suppose that that colonel, whose country’s president has been in Washington talking, goes on the air over five powerful broadcasting stations all over Latin America, all of which are characterized by defending democracy and attacking Cuban “communism.” Just suppose that the Cuban government offers the country the colonel has entered help in the form of weapons and men—men who know how to handle the weapons and have learned how to win battles and who volunteer. As the ideal president of a republic that does not exist—since this is an abstract example—what would you do? Turn down the offer? Ignore it? Put off a decision? Don’t be stupid, buddy.

The colonial powers have many intentions, all of them bad. For example, they can warn you that, if you aren’t a good boy, if you don’t give more support to your little friend Figueres or to the beautiful trio that “Cuba is sending” to the “democratic” conference, you may be very sorry. It may also be the first step for OAS intervention and for that battered agency of the colonial powers to take action. They may also try to grab your government, toss you aside like a dirty rag or a wastebasket full of scrap paper and put somebody else in your place. And, in all of these alternatives —and any others that may arise—there is a hidden dagger, always directed against Cuba. So, are you going to play the game of those who want to murder Cuban democracy, buddy? If you keep rocking in your comfortable chair, it won’t help you, so watch out; you’re just as much to blame as the one who kills the cow.

In addition, ideal president, abstract example, just suppose that imperialism kills the cow in our story one fine day; the next day—historically, the next day—they’ll crush you, buddy, for sure. You don’t smell of oil, as your predecessors did, and, in this ideal example, you aren’t

a military man. They'll crush you. Faced with this, ideal president, host of the "trio," and representative of the purest democracy, what will you do? Listen to the advice of a confirmed sniper; listen to a loving and friendly admonition: DON'T BE STUPID, BUDDY.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, May 1, 1960.

Knee Bends, International Organizations and Genuflections

By Sharpshooter

As you know, beloved compañeros of the Rebel Army, knee bends are one of the favorite exercises used for punishment and also to strengthen the muscles of the legs.

All the armies in the world with a military mentality—and our army will get one someday—assign knee bends as punishment for lesser infractions. This consists of squatting and doing knee bends. To squat, you have to bend your knees; bending your knees is called genuflecting, or kowtowing, and those who do it are kowtowers. Examples of well-paid native kowtowers: our friends of the *Diario de la Marina* and of *Prensa Libre*, our little friend [Luis] Conte Agüero and others of their ilk.

In the international arena, there are quite a few well-paid, prudent, moderate agencies. In general, they are directed by prudent, distinguished kowtowers who are often picked up in Scandinavia.

These distinguished kowtowers kneel to God—naturally, their god, the monopolies, who are lords and masters of all things—and sometimes, when the monopolies order them to do so, the distinguished kowtowers, who usually come from Scandinavia, refuse to send to a small, underdeveloped Caribbean country—which will remain nameless—the three technicians who are needed to organize the conference of similar countries that it wants to hold in September and to give an international character to that conference.

They haven’t been sent; they will be sent in the future. But this is not the only case. Another distinguished organization of the same kind is either removing its officials under all kinds of pretexts or pressuring them to leave, and this is how things will continue.

Mr. Monopoly—the same one whose nose was flattened in the Summit Conference—has ordered this, and, in this part of Latin America, you have to do what he says, or they’ll try to force us to frog jump or to do some other genuflection.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, May 22, 1960.

Cacareco, the Argentine Vote and Other Rhinoceroses

By Sharpshooter

The mighty brains of representative, electoral democracy have spoken. Their circumspect desires for Cuba’s constitutionalization have fallen gently and insidiously. This is the first step toward getting our country declared another dictatorship. They don’t want leaders like Fidel Castro who are supported by the people and their votes.

They want Cacareco, the rhinoceros in the São Paulo zoo, elected in a demonstration of complete rejection of politicians. Or, as happened in Argentina in a close election, they want the blank votes to win. What do those blank votes mean, kind champions of constitutionality, if not the only way the people have of saying that they aren’t satisfied and are trying by all possible means to show their rebellious spirit?

There is a reason why Fidel Castro—this Fidel Castro that the champions of representative democracy don’t want—is cheered in Ydígoras’s Guatemala, which has broken off relations with us, and why his influence is felt among the Venezuelan people, whose top leader got so peeved he left the May Day parade.

And, speaking of elections, what would happen if Fidel Castro were to insist that an electoral contest—complete with democratic, institutional

pieces of paper—be held between Mr. Ydígoras, for example, and himself, Fidel, as president of Guatemala and that other elections be held between himself, Fidel, and the presidents of many other republics that I won't list here? Ah, but there, the method of little pieces of paper in a wooden box is subordinated to a careful system that always allows certain national oligarchies linked to the most powerful international oligarchies to mock what the people want.

Voting means that the segregationists in South Africa can be in power to shoot the blacks and that, until the people's wrath topples him, Syngman Rhee can execute *(murder* is a more accurate word for it) his political opponents. The magic of the little bits of paper in the wooden box is that they allow Ydígoras, Somoza, Duvalier and Stroessner to be the constitutional representatives of their institutional republics and a 12-year nonaggression pact of mutual friendship to be signed between two political parties somewhere in Latin America.

We prefer our direct, aggressive, challenging manner of voting, based on fighting for what we want—for the man who has united the enormous masses of people who participated in our May Day march. We're afraid that the other system might give us A RHINOCEROS.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, May 8, 1960.

Ydígoras, Somoza and Other Proofs of Friendship

By Sharpshooter

It is a curious thing. This Cuban revolution, which was unanimously applauded on January 1, has begun to lose a series of friends among the Latin American governments. I repeat: among the governments, because it is continuing to gain friends among the people. And it is losing friends among those governments because they say it is a dictatorship that is closing down newspapers, curtailing freedom of speech, not holding elections, taking over public finance and doing away with private enterprise —in short, they present a wide range of reasons.

Naturally, we know that Ydígoras, Somoza and Trujillo hold exemplary elections; we also know, for example, that the Dominican Republic's economy is in private hands, because, when all is said and done, Trujillo owns the whole island. Okay, but he owns it as an individual, not as the head of state; he is not even president. The same holds true of the Somozas; Somoza owns everything as an individual, not as president. The fact that there haven't been any opposition newspapers in those countries for many years and that an international news agency has been thrown out of Guatemala—well, that is not important.

In other words, we are reviled for having done something that they do, too, but in the other direction, and for other things that they do but we don't. Shooting a war criminal is not the same as murdering a student.

But we are called mountebanks. Who is Mr. Ydígoras? Mr. Ydígoras is a military man, who has participated in a whole lot of battles for Latin America's liberation. He was against Árbenz; signed a "gentleman's agreement" with Castillo Armas; and one fine day, among wholesale rope jumping, hysterical shouts and other clowning, with the votes of the people —who didn't see all the evil in him—and a little electoral fraud, climbed to power. Naturally, he is a loyal ally of his old friend Castillo Armas. His political line has not covered up anything at all; he has maintained a firm friendship with the United States and with the rest of the "free world."

He hates only the communists, the Fidel-following communists, and all others who are fighting for their countries' freedom. Because of this, one fine day, perhaps waking up under the influence of the rum he had drunk the night before, a little under the weather in his green palace in Guatemala, he decided once and for all to follow the advice of his friend the US ambassador and break off relations with Cuba. And he broke them off. The workers protested on May Day, but he still broke off relations.

A little farther south in Central America, there is an individual named Luis Somoza, who seems to be an exact copy of a painting 30 years old—all you have to do is change the first name from Anastasio. More or less 30 years ago, President Roosevelt said, with his US pragmatism, "He may be a son of a bitch, but he's ours," and he was right (on both counts). That gentleman, who murdered Sandino, freedom and everything else that was decent in Nicaragua, was the United States' man, and he remained that all his life. They called the martyr who executed him a murderer, and US

doctors employed all the latest advances of US science in a US hospital in the Canal Zone (that was stolen from Panama) to try to save the life of the perforated puppet.

He died, but his dynasty didn't end; there is the picture of his son, Luis Somoza, who inherited the dynasty and who has the same characteristics as his beloved progenitor—a friend of the United States to the end. And this friend of the United States has expelled the members of our Cuban mission in Nicaragua—also after listening to the wise advice of his friend, the US ambassador in Managua.

In reality, the budget of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be more than ample after so many cutbacks, because there is a gentle murmur in the air of a plan that has been given the name of another Latin American democrat, by means of which Trujillo's downfall would be the means to screwing Cuba. First isolate Trujillo and then Cuba—present them as identical: both bloody, both dictatorial, both arbitrary, both bad guys. Thus the "good guys," the closest friends of the friends of the United States, have begun the long process for isolating Cuba. First Ydígoras, then Somoza, then… I know who, but I'm not going to give his name here.

I only know that it will be the best of the friends who are left, only a little less close a friend than Ydígoras and Somoza.

And we will be alone in this hemisphere—alone, disconsolately alone. It seems that they are threatening to leave us without the support of 20 rulers and their ministers, chambers of deputies, newspapers and business people. We will be so alone that the only ones who will remain with us will be the 150 million who constitute the weakest, needy and scorned of Latin America—the people, who are struggling and suffering alongside the Cuban revolution and who will emerge victorious with it.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, June 12, 1960.

The Marshall Plan, the Eisenhower Plan and Other Plans

By Sharpshooter

Marshall was a US general. He did what all US generals do in US politics: he defended the interests of US monopolies against all the peoples of the world, including the people of the United States.

It was in the years just after the last world war, when all the European countries that had just been liberated from Nazism were tragically poor. Millions of US dollars were spread among the hungry people, to return to the coffers of the big monopolies sooner or later and to enslave the peoples to the United States.

The years went by, and another general became very important in US politics: Eisenhower. They say that he's a good bridge player and also plays golf, and he, too, has a plan. His plan—which either he or somebody else thought up—is not a plan about golf courses or the rules of bridge; it's a plan about the Middle East and is aimed at guaranteeing the oil fields, now owned by a few monopolies whose influence we all know about in Cuba: the oil monopolies.

Those are the general's' plans. Now, however, there is a brand new plan in Latin America, so new that the name of its author is only whispered unofficially by cliques of know-it-alls in international politics, and it is rumored that it is already being applied.

The gyrfalcon of the monopolies' plan consists simply of convincing everybody that Trujillo and Fidel Castro are alike—the Dominican Republic and Cuba. Once they are equated, the OAS—giving weight to the proceedings and setting precedents—will first isolate, strangle and perhaps destroy Trujillo and then unleash the fury of all the other countries against poor Cuba. This is the situation we face; the plan is being carried out simultaneously.

In response to pressure by the peoples, relations are being broken with the dictator Trujillo. Wonderful. So, Trujillo carried out a revolution? Let's break with Trujillo. Trujillo is bad; Trujillo is a murderer! And who is responsible for what the evil Trujillo does? What obscure imperial force gives orders to the generals who, seemingly in the name of Trujillo, are invading a friendly oil-exporting country? Better not investigate, because it might be unhealthy. Let's break with Trujillo says the voice of the peoples and of the governments, but some governments are also breaking with Cuba. Trujillo–Castro; Cuba–the Dominican Republic. The extremes meet and become interchangeable.

That is the plan being implemented, the plan that the gossips say was thought up by a great democrat—whose name I can't mention—who suffers from irreconcilable Fidel Castritis, which is exacerbated when he has to meet with presidents; it weakens him so much he has to take to his bed. That is what the gossips say. But let's not think about which democratic president's name should be given to the plan; it's very probably a lie, and the plan does not deserve his name—or perhaps it should have a long and complicated name that combines the last names of many rulers who see their sinecures endangered.

What matters is that this plan is aimed at turning Fidel, in the eyes of the Latin American people, into a Trujillo, who must be destroyed; at using the governments' forces of international solidarity to destroy Trujillo; and at using those forces (or those of someone who says they represent those forces) to destroy Cuba. This is the hard part: all the other parts of the plan are simple and easy to carry out, but it's hard to confuse the people and to destroy Cuba by armed force. No matter who tries.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, June 17, 1960.

Nixon, Eisenhower, Hagerty and Other Warnings

By Sharpshooter

All Latin Americans remember the tour Vice-President Nixon made more than a year ago; it was an uninterrupted series of defeats that wound up with an enraged crowd attacking his car in Caracas with insults, spit and even bricks.

It was an entire region's unanimous rejection of a policy—the crude policy of an empire. After that, President Eisenhower went to South America to talk with a series of Latin American rulers and to try to tip the scales against Cuba.

Once again, the rejection was unanimous. In Brazil, enormous posters expressed feelings against the United States and for Cuba. In Argentina, he had to be rescued by a helicopter that took him to the embassy. In Chile, he

had pitched battles with the Central Organization of Workers (CUT); and, in Uruguay, the tear gas that was used against the angry crowd made President Eisenhower cry. Even in poor, disheartened Puerto Rico, so sunk in its pain and oppression, there were protests. Later, after the signing of a much-touted security pact between the United States and Japan and a lot of publicity for a forthcoming visit to Japan by President Eisenhower, several protests took place, culminating in the terrible beating that was given to Mr. Hagerty, the president's secretary, and President Eisenhower was officially invited to postpone his trip.

It is time for the US rulers to realize that these expressions of violence by the people, these tumultuous demonstrations in which many enthusiastic young people are beaten up or lose their lives, are in response to something. The US rulers have to understand, once and for all, that the people's opinion must be respected; that nobody can stop them from expressing what they think; and that, when their views are so obviously hostile, as in Japan and Caracas, some conclusions should be drawn. The world in which President Eisenhower can go around showing off his majestic figure as a hero of democracy without any problems is growing smaller. Our country is a part of this world, and, if President Eisenhower were to visit us with the honest intention of improving our relations—not that of exhibiting his "rights" as consul or to impose some new proconsuls—it might be the safest one of all.

In any case, all those demonstrations have been a very harsh warning for the United States—which, in this long struggle against the liberation of the world—is in an ever more precarious position. It can't get the puppet governments to subjugate their people any longer, and the people are rising up and expressing their opposition. It can't manacle or gag other nations any longer. In spite of the deaf ear it has turned, it should heed this final warning: it has to take the people into account.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, June 15, 1960.

Accusations at the OAS and United Nations and Other Stabs

By Sharpshooter

They say that clever birds in the countryside lay their eggs in one place and make a noise in another, to keep their enemies from endangering their offspring; this also happens with the birds of prey called monopolies. They have already decided to attack Cuba. Now, they may be considering what means to use or they may already have made this decision—perhaps a shady action by Allen Dulles in cahoots with the State Department or intervention by the whole Pentagon, with its stiff five-star generals calculating it all on the basis of mathematical formulas.

The only thing for sure is that they're doing the same thing as the birds in the countryside. They're going to the OAS and making a fuss there, and everybody is going to the OAS to defend that "bastion of freedom in the Americas." There, they are talking, shouting and turning purple in the face, while their eggs are being hatched near Cuba.

The US law book-thumpers in the House of Representatives and the OAS are engaged in discussions, but the Pentagon is working silently, drawing up formulas, and will one day look for its chicks, those that already think they're big enough to return to the warm and welcoming soil of Cuba. They will come preceded by the Pentagon's multi-motor planes, its bombs weighing many tons, its multiple troop divisions and the guns of its battleships sailing in line with its formulas.

They will come systematically to take their places with clockwork precision. What a shame, what a great shame, that, after so much painstaking work, so many calculations carried to the tenth decimal point and so much determination to defy the wrath of world public opinion, they will find that all of their formulas have failed, and they will totter and collapse. Because, in their formulas for Cuba, they have left out one tiny, worthless, insignificant factor, which will bring the empire's dreams crashing down: THE PEOPLE.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, July 10, 1960.

The “Court of Miracles” and Other Devices Used by the OAS

By Sharpshooter

The Court of Miracles is a legendary name and also the symbol of something where everything is transformed—that is, where concepts are confused. The extraordinary mess called the OAS is precisely a Court of Miracles. This Court of Miracles gets Chapitas or Tachito recognized along with the leaders of democratic countries, and it gives much greater worth to traitors to their peoples than to those who defend their countries’ freedom.

One of the characteristics of the Court of Miracles is that it keeps turning good people into bad ones and bad people into good. For it, the vote of a tiny island is worth just as much as that of a country with 60 million inhabitants. Don’t misunderstand: this is not democracy. They’re worth the same to the Court because everything is controlled by that “generous” spiritual father who is lord and master of the Americas: the United States. Uncle Sam moves his agile fingers, and, below, the puppets Frondizi and Beltrán move gracefully with very pretty, harmonious movements that make you think they have walked and talked by themselves. Therefore, the OAS is also called “the big theater.”

But sometimes the main artist, Mr. Monopoly, gets mad. Then the puppets become uncoordinated and seem to tremble, and you can see that they’re nothing more than puppets.

For example, they can’t break off relations with Cuba with the same arrogance and poise as they can with the Dominican Republic. But those illustrious citizens, representatives of the illustrious quasi-nations of Latin America, meet solicitously and vote 20-odd to zero every time the sheep herder claps his hands, and all the sheep follow him. This is why our institution is also called “the big flock.”

But, naturally, when they meet to rule on the lives and estates of a handful of men which they have turned into a free people by their sovereign will, the members of this innocent flock sometimes become arrogant and absurd, and sometimes become deeply worried about Soviet penetration.

They defend the Monroe Doctrine. What did Monroe say?

Well, Monroe said that the Americas should be for the Americans—that is, our beautiful, virgin, Indian America should be for the giant of the North. He also said that the United States would not intervene in Europe and said that the United States would not allow any extra-continental power to intervene in the Americas. What has remained of Mr. Monroe's verbal bluster? His doctrine of nonintervention is frequently invoked, but those who invoke it have never asked themselves where the US bases now in Britain, Greece, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, France and Spain will be relocated—on Mars? What has become of the promise that the United States would not intervene in Europe? It has been forgotten. The pretty puppets, who dance to the tune of the puppet master, know what has been swept under the rug but are delighted to lend themselves to this scheme that has been drawn up against our democracy, forgetting true bonds of solidarity.

In fact, the Doctrine should be named for the "pure and delicate" place whose "perfume" assaults the noses of all who go along the Vía Blanca Highway—Havana's garbage dump: Cayo Cruz. That would be just as poetic as and much more accurate than the name it bears now.

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, July 31, 1960.

A Tiny Bit is a Big Enough Sample and Other Short Stories

By Sharpshooter

In stores all over the world, customers are shown tiny samples to demonstrate the quality of the merchandise. To show the quality of our monopoly merchandise, we transcribe this report:

"San Juan, P.R. (PL)—The results of the birth control program in Puerto Rico will be studied by Dr. Alan Guttmacher, a professor in the School of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, who arrived in this capital expressly for this purpose.

“Sinai Hospital in Puerto Rico is used as an experimental laboratory for developing the contraceptives known as Emko and Enovid.

“The studies include 17,000 families from all over the island, which has been divided into 20 research areas.

“Celestina Zalduondo, Executive Director of Family Planning for Puerto Rico, directs the program.

“Guttmacher declared that the purpose of the studies was to find a simple, effective method for birth control that wouldn’t harm the people’s health and happiness.

“Enovid pills are the simplest method, but they are still very expensive. The contraceptive Emko has been used most extensively in the projects and is sold at cost, with no profit for the laboratories that produce it, thanks to an annual donation by the Sunnen Foundation.

“Guttmacher said that many overpopulated countries were watching the studies.”

This is the kind of aid that the empire offers the underdeveloped countries. Puerto Ricans have the “freedom” to go and die in Korea to defend “the American way of life,” but they don’t have the freedom to have children, because it is not in the interests of the United States for an “inferior” race to breed new offspring that can enter the United States freely. The country that has dispensed dollars all over the world—and now, as a special contribution, offers $500 million for Latin America—has not found a better way of doing away with hunger in Puerto Rico than to keep the Puerto Ricans from having children.

Poor homeland of Albizu Campos! Poor laboratory of hunger and contraceptives, how sad it is to see you with a noose around your neck, submissively following your arrogant blond master. Shouldn’t this give us the material for a new, however short, fairy tale? One that begins like this:

“Once upon a time, Puerto Rico, the youngest of the independent nations in the Americas, was born in such and such a month in 196_. Thanks to its republican form of government, its eponymous hero, Pedro Albizu Campos, and its efforts, which are greater now, it is buying four big feet from a European country so it can begin to walk and get as far away as possible from the henchmen who murdered and tortured its children and tried to make them idiots; henchmen who studied hunger in them just as

scientists study hunger in mice and who then tried to castrate them, to wipe them out in order to ‘improve the race.’”

How much we Latin Americans would like to see a fairy tale like this come true! Everybody would go and give the Puerto Ricans advice: “Don’t buy the feet, buddy. You’ll do much better if, like us, you buy some false teeth and learn how to bite—to draw blood.”

Published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, August 7, 1960.

Speeches (1960)

Che Guevara gave this speech on July 28, 1960, to the delegates to the Latin American Youth Congress and regional political leaders, including Jacobo Árbenz, former president of Guatemala. It contains the nucleus of the ideas later the subject of his important work, “Notes for the Study of the Ideology of the Cuban Revolution,”[1] and outlined his concept of solidarity with the peoples of Latin America.

Speech to the Latin American Youth Congress

Havana, July 28, 1960

Compañeros of the Americas and the entire world:

It would take a long time to extend individual greetings on behalf of our country to each of you, and to each of the countries represented here. We nevertheless want to draw attention to some of those who represent countries afflicted by natural catastrophes or catastrophes caused by imperialism.

We would like to extend special greetings to the representative of the Chilean people, Clotario Bletz, whose youthful voice you heard a moment ago. His maturity can serve as an example and a guide to our fellow working people from that unfortunate land, which has been devastated by one of the most terrible earthquakes in history.

We would also like to extend special greetings to Jacobo Árbenz, [former] president of the first Latin American nation [Guatemala] to raise its voice fearlessly against colonialism, and to express the cherished desires of its peasant masses, through a deep and courageous agrarian reform. We would like to express our gratitude to him and to the democracy overturned

in that country for the example it gave us, and for enabling us to make a correct appreciation of all the weaknesses his government was unable to overcome. In this way, it has been possible for us [here in Cuba] to get at the root of the matter, and to decapitate with one blow those who held power, as well as the henchmen serving them.

We would also like to greet two of the delegations representing countries that perhaps have suffered the most in the Americas. First of all, Puerto Rico, which today, 150 years after freedom was first proclaimed in the Americas, continues to fight to take the first, and perhaps most difficult step of achieving, at least in formal terms, a free government. I ask Puerto Rico's delegates to convey my greetings, and those of all Cuba, to Pedro Albizu Campos. We would like to convey to him our heartfelt respect, our recognition of the example he has shown with his valor, and our fraternal feelings as free men toward a man who, despite being in the dungeons of so-called US democracy, is still free.

Although it may seem paradoxical, I would also like to greet today the delegation representing the purest of the US people. I would like to salute them because the US people are not to blame for the barbarity and injustice of their rulers, and because they are innocent victims of the rage of all the peoples of the world, who sometimes confuse a social system with the people of that country.

All of Cuba, myself included, open our arms to the individuals and the delegations, to show you what is good here and what is bad, what has been achieved and what has yet to be achieved, the road traveled and the road ahead. Because even though all of you come to deliberate at this Latin American Youth Congress on behalf of your respective countries, I am sure each of you also comes here full of curiosity to find out exactly what is this phenomenon of the Cuban revolution, born on a Caribbean island.

Many of you, from diverse political tendencies, will ask yourselves, as you did yesterday and as perhaps you will do tomorrow: What is the Cuban revolution? What is its ideology? Immediately the question will arise, as it always does, among both adherents and adversaries: Is the Cuban revolution communist? Some say yes, hoping the answer is yes, or that the revolution is heading in that direction. Others, disappointed perhaps, will also think the answer is yes. There will be disappointed people who believe the answer is no, as well as those who hope the answer is no.

I might be asked whether this revolution you see is a communist revolution. After the usual explanations about communism (leaving aside the hackneyed accusations by imperialism and the colonial powers, who confuse everything), I would answer that if this revolution is Marxist—and listen well that I say Marxist—it is because the revolution discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx.

In saluting the Cuban revolution recently, Vice-Premier [Anastas] Mikoyan, one of the leading figures of the Soviet Union and a lifelong Marxist, said that the revolution was a phenomenon Marx had not foreseen. He noted that life teaches more than the wisest books and the most profound thinkers.

The Cuban revolution was moving forward, without worrying about labels, without checking what others were saying about it, but constantly scrutinizing what the Cuban people wanted of it. The revolution quickly found that it had achieved, or was on the way to achieving, the happiness of its people; and that it had also become the object of inquisitive looks from friend and foe alike—hopeful looks from an entire continent, and furious looks from the king of monopolies.

This did not come about overnight. Permit me to relate some of my own experience—an experience that could help many people in similar circumstances gain an understanding of how our current revolutionary thinking came about. Even though there is certainly continuity, the Cuban revolution you see today is not the Cuban revolution of yesterday, even after the victory. Much less is it the Cuban insurrection prior to our victory, when those 82 youths made the difficult crossing of the Gulf of Mexico [in November–December 1956] in a leaky boat to reach the shores of the Sierra Maestra. Between those young people and the representatives of Cuba today there is a distance that cannot be accurately measured in years, with 24-hour days and 60-minute hours. All the members of the Cuban government— young in age, young in character, and young in the illusions they held—have nevertheless matured in an extraordinary school of experience; in living contact with the people and with their needs and aspirations.

Our collective hope had been to arrive one day somewhere in Cuba, and after a few shouts, a few heroic actions, a few deaths and a few radio broadcasts, to take power and drive out the dictator Batista. History showed

us it was far more difficult to overthrow a government backed and partnered by an army of murderers, and backed by the greatest colonial power on earth.

Little by little, each of our ideas changed. We, the children of the cities, learned to respect the peasants. We learned to respect their sense of independence, their loyalty; we learned to recognize their age-old yearning for the land that had been snatched from them; and to recognize their experience in the thousand paths across the hills. From us, the peasants learned how valuable someone is when they have a rifle in their hand, and when they are prepared to fire that rifle at another person, regardless of how many rifles that other person has. The peasants taught us their know-how and we taught the peasants our sense of rebellion. From that moment until now, and forever, the peasants of Cuba and the rebel forces of Cuba—today the Cuban revolutionary government—have united as one.

The revolution continued to progress, and we drove the troops of the dictatorship from the steep slopes of the Sierra Maestra. We came face-to-face with another reality of Cuba: the workers—both in agricultural and industrial centers. We learned from them, too, while we taught them that at the right moment, a well-aimed shot fired at the right person is much more powerful and effective than the most powerful and effective peaceful demonstration. We learned the value of organization, while again we taught the value of rebellion. Out of this, organized rebellion arose throughout the entire territory of Cuba.

By then much time had passed. Many deaths marked the road of our victory—many in combat, others innocent victims. The imperialist forces began to see there was something more than a group of bandits in the heights of the Sierra Maestra, something more than a group of ambitious assailants arrayed against the ruling power. The imperialists generously offered their bombs, bullets, planes and tanks to the dictatorship. With those tanks in the lead, the government’s forces again attempted, for the last time, to ascend the Sierra Maestra.

By then, columns of our forces had already left the Sierra to take over other regions of Cuba and had formed the “Frank País” Second Eastern Front under Commander Raúl Castro. We were winning over public opinion —we were now headline material in the international pages of newspapers from every corner of the world. Yet despite all this, the Cuban revolution at

that time possessed only 200 rifles—not 200 men, but 200 rifles—to stop the regime's last offensive, in which the dictatorship amassed 10,000 soldiers and every type of instrument of death. Each one those 200 rifles carries a history of sacrifice and blood. They were rifles of imperialism that the blood and determination of our martyrs dignified and transformed into rifles of the people.

In this way, the last stage of the army's great offensive unfolded, under the name of "encirclement and annihilation."

What I am saying to you, young people from throughout the Americas who are diligent and eager to learn, is that if today we are putting into practice what is known as Marxism, it is because we discovered it here. In those days, after defeating the dictatorship's troops and inflicting 1,000 casualties on their ranks—five times as many casualties as the sum total of our combat forces, and after seizing more than 600 weapons—a small pamphlet written by Mao Tse-tung fell into our hands. The pamphlet dealt with strategic problems of the revolutionary war in China and described the campaigns that the dictator Chiang Kai-shek carried out against the popular forces, which just like here were called "campaigns of encirclement and annihilation."

Not only had the same words been used on opposite sides of the globe to describe their campaigns, but both dictators had resorted to the same types of campaigns to try to destroy the popular forces. The popular forces here, without knowing of the manuals already written about the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare, used the same methods as those used on the opposite side of the world to combat the dictatorship's forces. Naturally, when somebody lives through an experience, that experience can be utilized by somebody else. But it is also possible to go through the same experience without knowing of the earlier one.

We were unaware of the experiences the Chinese troops accumulated during 20 years of struggle in their territory. But we knew our own territory, we knew our enemy, and we used something every person has on their shoulders—which is worth a lot if they know how to use it—we used our heads to guide our fight against the enemy. As a result, we defeated it.

The westward moves came later, and the breaking of Batista's communication lines, and the crushing fall of the dictatorship when no one expected it. Then came January 1 [1959] and the revolution, without

thinking about what had been written, but hearing what was needed from the lips of the people, decided first and foremost to punish the guilty, and it did so.

Immediately the colonial powers splashed the story all over the front pages, calling it murder, immediately trying to do what imperialists always try to do: sow division. “Communist murderers are killing people,” they said. “There is, however, a naive patriot Fidel Castro, who had nothing to do with it and can be saved.” In this way they tried to sow divisions among those who had fought for the same cause. They maintained this hope for some time.

One day they happened upon the Agrarian Reform Law, and saw that it was much more violent and profound than the law their very intellectual, self-appointed advisers had counseled. All of those advisers, by the way, are today in Miami or some other US city, like Pepín Rivero of *Diario de la Marina*, or Medrano of *Prensa Libre*. Others, including a prime minister in our government, also counseled great moderation, saying, “one must handle such things with moderation.”

“Moderation” is one of those words the agents of colonialism like to use. Those who are afraid, or who think of betraying in one way or another, are moderates. In no sense, however, are the people moderate.

The advice given was to divide up *marabú* land—*marabú* is a wild shrub that plagues our fields—and have the peasants cut *marabú* with machetes, or settle in swamps, or grab pieces of public land that might somehow have escaped the voraciousness of the large landowners. To touch the holdings of the large landowners was a sin greater than anything they imagined to be possible. But it *was* possible.

I recall a conversation I had in those days with a gentleman who said he had no problems at all with the revolutionary government because he owned only 900 *caballerías.* Nine hundred *caballerías* comes to more than 10,000 hectares [25,000 acres]. This gentleman, of course, did eventually have problems with the revolutionary government; his lands were seized, divided up, and turned over to individual peasants. In addition, cooperatives were created on lands where agricultural workers were already beginning to work collectively for a wage.

This is one of the peculiar features of the Cuban revolution that must be studied. For the first time in Latin America, a revolution carried out an

agrarian reform that attacked property relations other than feudal ones. There were feudal remnants in the tobacco and coffee industries, and in these areas land was turned over to individuals who had been working small plots and wanted their land. But given how sugarcane, rice and cattle were cultivated and worked in Cuba, that land was seized as a unit and worked by workers who were granted joint ownership. Those workers are not owners of single parcels of land, but of the whole great joint enterprise called a cooperative. This has enabled our far-reaching agrarian reform to move rapidly. Each of you should let it sink in, as an incontrovertible truth, that no government here in Latin America can call itself revolutionary unless its first measure is agrarian reform.

A government that says it will implement timid agrarian reform cannot call itself revolutionary. A revolutionary government carries out agrarian reform that transforms the system of property relations—that does not just give peasants unused land, but primarily gives peasants land that *was* in use, land that belonged to large landowners, the best land with the greatest yield, land that, moreover, had been stolen from the peasants in past epochs.

That is agrarian reform, and that is how all revolutionary governments must begin. On the basis of agrarian reform the great battle for the industrialization of a country can be waged, a battle that is very complicated, in which one must fight against very big things.

We could very easily fail, as in the past, if it weren't for the existence of very great forces in the world today that are friends of small nations like ours. I must note here for everyone's benefit—for those who like it and those who hate it—that at the present time countries like Cuba, revolutionary, non-moderate countries, cannot respond half-heartedly as to whether the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China are our friends. They must answer with all their might that the Soviet Union, China and all the socialist countries are our friends, as are many colonial or semicolonial countries that have freed themselves.

These friendships with governments throughout the world is why it is possible to carry out a revolution in Latin America. When the imperialists carried out aggression against us using sugar and petroleum, the Soviet Union was there to give us petroleum and to buy sugar from us. Without that, we would have needed all our strength, all our faith, and the devotion of the people, which is enormous, to withstand the blow this would have

signified. These measures taken by “US democracy” against this “threat to the free world” would have had huge effects on the living standards of the Cuban people, and the forces of disunity would have done their work, viciously playing on the effects.

There are government leaders in Latin America who still advise us to lick the hand that wants to hit us; to spit on the one who wants to help us. We answer these government leaders who, in the middle of the 20th century, recommend bowing our heads: We say, first of all, that Cuba does not bow down before anyone. Secondly, we say that Cuba, from its own experience, knows the weaknesses and defects of the governments advising this approach—and the rulers of these countries know them, too; they know them very well. Nevertheless, Cuba has not deigned or allowed itself, or thought it permissible, to advise the rulers of these countries to shoot every traitorous official or nationalize all the monopoly holdings in their countries.

The people of Cuba shot their murderers and dissolved the army of the dictatorship. Yet they have not been telling governments in Latin America to put the murderers of the people before firing squads or to stop propping up dictatorships. Cuba knows there are murderers in each one of these nations. We can attest to that fact because a Cuban belonging to our own movement [Andrés Coba] was killed, in a friendly country [Venezuela], by henchmen left over from the previous dictatorship.

We do not ask that they put the person who assassinated one of our members before a firing squad, although we would have done so in this country. What we ask, simply, is that if it is not possible to act with solidarity in the Americas, at least don’t be a traitor to the Americas. Let no one in the Americas parrot the notion that we are bound to a continental alliance that includes our great enslaver. That is the most cowardly and denigrating lie a ruler in Latin America can utter.

We, the entire people of Cuba who belong to the Cuban revolution, call our friends friends, and our enemies enemies. We do not allow for halfway terms: one is either a friend or an enemy. We, the people of Cuba, don’t tell any nation on earth what they should do with, for example, the International Monetary Fund. But we will not tolerate them coming to tell us what to do. We know what has to be done. If they want to do what we would do, good; if not, that is up to them. We will not tolerate anyone telling us what to do.

We were here on our own until the last moment, awaiting the direct aggression of the mightiest power in the capitalist world, and we did not ask for help from anyone. We were prepared, together with our people, to resist through to the final consequences of our rebel spirit.

We can speak with our heads held high, and with very clear voices, in all the congresses and councils where our brothers of the world meet. When the Cuban revolution speaks, it may make mistakes, but it will never tell a lie. In every place where it speaks, the Cuban revolution expresses the truths that its sons and daughters have learned, and it does so openly to its friends and its enemies alike. It never throws stones from behind corners; it never gives advice containing daggers cloaked in velvet.

We are subject to attacks. We are attacked a great deal because of what we are. But we are attacked much, much more because we show to each nation of the Americas what is possible. What is important for imperialism —more than Cuba's nickel mines or sugar mills, Venezuela's oil, Mexico's cotton, Chile's copper, Argentina's cattle, Paraguay's grasslands or Brazil's coffee— is the totality of these raw materials upon which the monopolies feed.

They place obstacles in our path every chance they get, and when they themselves are unable to erect obstacles, others in Latin America are unfortunately willing to do so. Names are not important, because no single individual is to blame. We cannot say that [Venezuelan] President Betancourt is to blame for the death of our compatriot and co-thinker [Andrés Coba]. President Betancourt is not to blame; he is simply a prisoner of a regime that calls itself democratic. That democratic regime could have set another example in Latin America, but it nevertheless committed the great mistake of not using the firing squad in a timely way. Today the democratic government of Venezuela is again a prisoner of the henchmen Venezuela was familiar with a short while ago—and with whom Cuba was familiar, and with whom the majority of Latin America remains familiar.

We cannot blame President Betancourt for this death. We can only say the following, supported by our record as revolutionaries and by our conviction as revolutionaries: the day President Betancourt, elected by his people, feels himself a prisoner to such a degree that he cannot go forward and decides to ask the help of a fraternal people, Cuba is here to show Venezuela some of our experiences in the field of revolution.

President Betancourt should know that it was not—and could not have been—our diplomatic representative who started the affair that ended in a death. It was the North Americans, or in the final analysis the US government. A bit closer to the events, it was Batista's men, and closer still, it was those dressed up in anti-Batista clothing, the US government's reserve forces in this country, who wanted to defeat Batista yet maintain the system: people like [José] Miró Cardona, [Miguel Angel] Quevedo, [Pedro Luis] Díaz Lanz and Huber Matos. In direct line of sight it was the reactionary forces operating in Venezuela. It is very sad to say, but the leader of Venezuela is at the mercy of his own troops, who may at any moment try to assassinate him, as happened a while ago in the case of the car packed with dynamite. The Venezuelan president, at this moment, is a prisoner of his repressive forces.

This hurts, because the Cuban people received from Venezuela the greatest amount of solidarity and support when we were in the Sierra Maestra. It hurts, because much earlier than us Venezuela was able to rid itself of the hateful and oppressive system represented by [Marcos] Pérez Jiménez. It hurts, because when our delegations went to Venezuela— first Fidel Castro, and later our President Dorticós—they received great demonstrations of support and affection.

A people that has achieved the high degree of political consciousness, that has the high fighting spirit of the Venezuelan people, will not remain prisoners of a few bayonets or bullets for long. Bullets and bayonets can change hands, and the murderers themselves can wind up dead.

But it is not my mission to list here all the stabs in the back we have received from Latin American governments in recent days and to add fuel to the fire of rebellion. That is not my task because, in the first place, Cuba is still not free of danger. Today Cuba is still the focus of the imperialists' attention in this part of the world. Cuba needs your solidarity, the solidarity of those from the Democratic Action Party in Venezuela, the URD [Democratic Republican Union], and the communists, and COPEI [Independent Political Electoral Committee], and any other party. It needs the solidarity of the Mexican people, the Colombian people, the Brazilian people and the people of every nation in Latin America.

The colonialists are scared. They, like everyone else, are afraid of missiles, they too are afraid of bombs. Today they see, for the first time in

their history, that bombs of destruction can also fall on their families, on everything they have built with so much love—as far as anyone can love wealth and riches. They began to make estimates; they put their electronic calculators to work, and they saw this set-up would be self-defeating.

This in no way means that they have renounced the suppression of Cuban democracy. Once again they are making laborious estimates on their calculating machines as to which of the available methods is best for attacking the Cuban revolution. They have the methods of Ydígoras, Nicaragua, Haiti. For the moment, they do not have the Dominican method. They also have the mercenaries in Florida, the OAS [Organization of American States] and many other methods. And they have power to continue improving these methods.

[Former] President Árbenz and his people know they had many methods and a great deal of might. Unfortunately for Guatemala, President Árbenz had an army of the old style, and was not fully aware of the solidarity of the peoples and their capacity to repel any type of aggression.

One of our greatest strengths is being exerted throughout the world—regardless of partisan differences in any country—the strength to defend the Cuban revolution at any given moment. Permit me to say this is a duty of Latin America's youth. What we have here in Cuba is something new and it's worth studying. You will have to assess what is good here for yourselves.

There are many bad things, I know. There is a lot of disorganization, I know. If you have been to the Sierra Maestra, then you already know this. We still use guerrilla methods, I know. We lack technicians in necessary numbers commensurate to our aspirations, I know. Our army has still not reached the necessary degree of maturity and the militia members have not achieved sufficient coordination to constitute themselves as an army, I know.

But what I also know, and I want all of you to know, is that this revolution has always acted with the will of the entire people of Cuba. Every peasant and worker who handles a rifle poorly is working every day to handle it better, to defend *their* revolution. And if at this moment they can't understand the complicated workings of a machine whose technician fled to the United States, then they are studying every day to learn it, so

their factory runs better. The peasants are studying *their* tractor, to fix its mechanical problems, so the fields of *their* cooperative yield more.

All Cubans, from both the city and country, share the same sentiments and are marching toward the future, totally united in their thinking, with a leader they have absolute confidence in because he has shown in a thousand battles and on a thousand different occasions his capacity for sacrifice and the power and foresight of his thought.

The nation before you today might disappear from the face of the earth because a nuclear conflict may be unleashed on its account, and it might be the first target. Even if this entire island were to disappear along with its inhabitants, Cuba's people would consider themselves satisfied and fulfilled if each of you, upon returning to your countries, would say:

"Here we are. Our words come from the humid air of the Cuban forests. We have climbed the Sierra Maestra and seen the dawn, and our minds and our hands are filled with the seeds of that dawn. We are prepared to plant them in this land, and defend them so they can grow."

From all the sister countries of the Americas, and from our own land, if it should still remain standing as an example, from such a moment on and forever, the voice of the peoples will answer: "Thus it shall be: Let freedom triumph in every corner of the Americas!"

In Support of the Declaration of Havana

Camagüey, September 18, 1960

In a mass assembly in Havana on September 2, 1960, the people of Cuba adopted the Declaration of Havana, which denounced US maneuvers against Cuba and ratified Cuba's sovereign determination to proclaim its full independence. It was a historic moment, because Washington immediately began to blackmail other Latin American nations into denouncing Cuba at the Organization of American States—actions that finally led nearly all the countries in the region to break with the Cuban revolutionary government.

Che Guevara addressed a mass rally in Camagüey on September 18, 1960, which adopted the same declaration.

Compañeros:

Once again, the people and representatives of the revolutionary government of Cuba have met to talk about the latest events that have taken place in this part of the world, in the Americas, and to place before you, for your consideration and possible ratification, the resolution of the People's General Assembly in Havana.

It is good to recall that the Declaration of Havana, as it will be known from now on in history, is the reply of the Cuban people, meeting in a General Assembly, to the imperialist acts of aggression that the "master" Herter and his Latin American lackeys devised in San José, Costa Rica.

It is also good to remember that all of the revolutionary advances that have been made in the past year and a half, a period filled with very important events for the history of Latin America, constitute a steady response by the people to acts of aggression both from abroad and from inside Cuba by large landowners and other counterrevolutionaries.

Just after January 1, 1959, we began executing the war criminals who had been convicted of having committed terrible crimes against humanity. Then the US press and the mercenary press in Latin America unleashed their first campaigns against us, condemning the executions in the name of humanity— that same humanity they ignored here in Cuba, as in many other parts of Latin America, when the people were being pitilessly assassinated. The revolutionary government's response was to call all of the people together in front of Havana's Palace of Government for them to decide whether or not they wanted revolutionary justice. And you will remember that the entire people spoke out for revolutionary justice and against foreigners' meddling in our laws and our development.

When the Agrarian Reform Law was passed, a campaign immediately began—and is still going on—against all the members of the government, accusing us of having committed iniquitous crimes and also accusing us of being a "beachhead" of international communism here in Latin America. Among other things, they accused us of having a missile base in Camagüey, of having a submarine base south of our island and of launching attacks against the colossus of the North.

It seems they really considered us a dangerous adversary. Now, when the United Nations is opening another session of the General Assembly, there are only four leaders in the whole world that have the exalted

privilege and great honor of being detested by the US plutocracy, and one of those four leaders is precisely our Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

We should be asking ourselves, what is it about Fidel that worries the US authorities so much? What is it about the people of Cuba, a small, underdeveloped island—as they describe us—with a population of only around six million, that makes the United States hate us just as much as the Soviet Union, which has a population of over 200 million, possesses the most powerful means of destruction on earth, has the most powerful army in the world and is the declared enemy of the United States? What is it about Cuba that makes the United States compare it with [the] People's [Republic of] China, which has 650 million inhabitants—the nation with the largest population on earth—and is the second greatest power in the socialist world? What is it about Cuba? What is the danger posed by the Cuban revolution?

Men and women of Camagüey, the danger posed by the Cuban revolution is you and me. The danger is that what we're doing may spread throughout Latin America, that the custom of talking with the people and asking the people's advice whenever necessary may spread through Latin America. Because, if you ask the people of Latin America what should be done with the large landowners, all of them will give the same answer as you; all of them will denounce large landholdings.

And if you ask the people of Latin America who their enemy is, who has sabotaged their development for 50 years and who has installed rulers such as Trujillo and Somoza who have massacred their people, all of the Latin American people will say that the US government is guilty of the most terrible crimes. They will say that the US government has promoted genocide in Latin America and still uses its rifles (as Batista did here) to maintain the system of oppression by a few over the people as a whole. This is why they fear us and why they want to isolate and destroy us: they are very afraid that our example will spread, that cooperatives will flourish, large landholdings will be broken up and bearded guerrillas will appear all over Latin America. They are afraid that the Andes will become another Sierra Maestra.

That is what the US authorities fear: our example. They know just as well as you do that what they have said about missiles in Camagüey and about a submarine base are lies. They know that this government has not

sold out to any other government on the face of the earth and that if the Soviet Union or the government of the People's Republic of China or any other power on earth should ever make its assistance to us dependent on our giving up a part of our sovereignty or our honor, Cuba would immediately break with them. We have accepted assistance from the Soviet Union and the hand of friendship that all of the socialist powers have extended to us, because they have offered that assistance and friendship without attaching any political strings to it.

They know we don't have the same conditions they have; they know that socialism has not been established here. They simply offer us their assistance so we can continue along the path we have freely chosen, and this is why we have accepted it, because no stipulations have dishonored that assistance, because these weapons that you see are weapons that the government of the Republic of Czechoslovakia sold to us unconditionally. There is no pact of any kind that restricts us in the use of these weapons; they are ours, to be used in defending our sovereignty—there are no other stipulations limiting their use.

The history of these weapons is another thing the United States does not like. Why are these weapons here? Did we try to get them from Czechoslovakia right from the start, or don't the US authorities remember how we went from one European country to another, trying to buy weapons and planes, and how we took up a collection among the people to be able to buy these planes and these weapons?

What was the imperialists' response? They pressured all the European governments in their sphere of influence not to let even a single bullet reach Cuba, and the last government that stood firm against the empire's pressures—it maintained that position up until recently—has now told us that it won't send us any more rifles. We had the choice of accepting assistance from the socialist countries and being attacked as "communists" or doing nothing here and being wiped out as fools.

It's been a long time, compañeros, since the Cuban people could be fooled with words, promises and empty posturing. When we were faced with that dilemma, we accepted the challenge, and here are the Czech weapons. Soon, planes from any power willing to sell them to us will be flying here, and there will be tanks from other powers, and cannon,

bazookas, machine guns and ammunition of all kinds for those weapons, bought from whoever will sell them to us.

This is another example that the US authorities don't like.

The same thing happened with Guatemalan democracy some time ago.

One fine day the Guatemalans weren't sold any more weapons; the rifles began to age, and the cartridges began to run out; and that democracy began to look for weapons with which to defend itself against the attack that was being prepared precisely by the people who would no longer sell them weapons. And when, in the end, exercising its legitimate right to do so, it bought a handful of rifles from a socialist country, it was attacked, because the United States wouldn't allow a "communist" base to exist so close to the Panama Canal. And then the pirate planes that were allowed to leave Panamanian airports without any insignia pitilessly bombed the Guatemalan people until the aggressors subjugated the government and plunged that country into the poverty and ignominy in which it exists to this day. That is what the US authorities want. When they see the example of Cuba, they suffer greatly, because those bestial reactions are the spawn of spite, the spawn of the suffering of those who see their imperial privileges reduced once and for all.

Without any right to do so, they are trying to confine Fidel Castro to a tiny part of Cuba's territory; they are also trying to assassinate him, if possible. They are trying to destroy our democracy; they would like to trample on and massacre our people. When they learned about the Soviet missiles, they controlled their fury and replaced all the insults they had planned to hurl against our people with high-sounding words. That is why they're like this, just like wild beasts that become more dangerous and more aggressive when they are wounded and restrained. That is what US imperialism is like now, restrained by the forces all over the world that want their liberation. The people are clamoring for their freedom and fighting against the puppet governments, which are threatened with losing their privileges, threatened with losing all the wealth they amassed from the sweat and blood of the people. That is why they're like this, why they're bellowing from impotence and attacking anybody within striking distance, like mad dogs.

In view of all this and aware of the importance of the Declaration of Havana—considering all this background and the reasons for this

declaration—I will now read it. When I have finished reading it, raise your hands if you agree with what it says.

Declaration of Havana:

> The people of Cuba, Free Territory of America, acting with the inalienable powers that flow from an effective exercise of their sovereignty through direct, public and universal suffrage, have formed themselves in a National General Assembly beside the monument and memory of José Martí.
>
> The National General Assembly of the Cuban People, as its sovereign act and as an expression of the sentiments of the people of Our America states:
>
> FIRST: Condemns in its entirety the so-called Declaration of San José, Costa Rica, a document that, under dictation from US imperialism, offends the sovereignty and dignity of other peoples of the continent and the right of each nation to self-determination.
>
> SECOND: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People strongly condemns US imperialism for its gross and criminal domination, lasting for more than a century, of all the peoples of Latin America, who more than once have seen the soil of Mexico, Nicaragua, Haiti, Santo Domingo and Cuba invaded; who have lost to a greedy imperialism such wide and rich lands as Texas, such vital strategic zones as the Panama Canal, and even, as in the case of Puerto Rico, entire countries converted into territories of occupation; who have suffered the insults of the Marines toward our wives and daughters and toward the most cherished memorials of the history of our lands, among them the figure of José Martí.
>
> This domination, built upon superior military power, upon unfair treaties and upon the shameful collaboration of traitorous governments, has for more than a hundred years made of Our America —the America that Bolívar, Hidalgo, Juárez, San Martín, O'Higgins, Tiradentes, Sucre and Martí wished to see free—a zone of exploitation, a backyard in the financial and political Yankee empire, a reserve supply of votes in international organizations where we of the Latin

American countries have always been regarded as beasts of burden to a "rough and brutal North that despises us."

The National General Assembly of the Cuban People declares that Latin American governments betray the ideals of independence, destroy the sovereignty of their peoples and obstruct a true solidarity among our countries by accepting this demonstrated and continued domination. For such reasons, this assembly, in the name of the Cuban people, with the same spirit of liberation that moved the immortal fathers of our countries, rejects this domination, thereby fulfilling the hope and the will of the Latin American peoples.

THIRD: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People also rejects the attempt to perpetuate the Monroe Doctrine, until now utilized "to extend the domination in America" of greedy imperialists, and to inject more easily "the poison of loans, canals and railroads," as denounced by José Martí long ago.

Therefore, in defiance of that false Pan-Americanism that is merely the prostration of spineless governments before Washington and rule over the interest of our peoples by the Yankee monopolies, this assembly of the Cuban people proclaims the liberating Latin Americanism of Martí and Benito Juárez. Furthermore, while extending the hand of friendship to the people of the United States—a people that includes persecuted intellectuals, blacks threatened with lynching, and workers subjected to the control of gangsters—this assembly reaffirms its will to march "with the whole world and not just a part of it."

FOURTH: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People declares that the spontaneous offer of the Soviet Union to help Cuba if imperialist military forces attack our country cannot be considered an act of intervention, but rather an open act of solidarity. Such support, offered to Cuba in the face of an imminent attack by the Pentagon, honors the government of the Soviet Union as much as cowardly and criminal aggressions against Cuba dishonor the government of the United States. Therefore, this National General Assembly of the Cuban People declares before America and the world that it accepts with gratitude the help of rockets from the Soviet Union should our territory be invaded by military forces from the United States.

FIFTH: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People denies absolutely that there has existed on the part of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China any aim "to make use of the economic, political and social situation in Cuba… in order to break continental unity and to endanger hemispheric unity." From the first to the last volley, from the first to the last of the 20,000 martyrs who fell in the struggle to overthrow tyranny and win power for the revolution, from the first to the last revolutionary law, from the first to the last act of the revolution, the people of Cuba have acted of their own free will. Therefore, no grounds exist for blaming either the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China for the existence of a revolution that is the just response of Cuba to crimes and injuries perpetrated by imperialism in America.

On the contrary, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People believes that the peace and security of the hemisphere and of the world are endangered by the policy of the US government—which forces the governments of Latin America to imitate it. This US policy seeks to isolate the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and engage in aggressive and provocative acts, systematically excluding the People's Republic of China from the United Nations, despite the fact that it represents nearly all the 600 million inhabitants of China.

Therefore, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People confirms its policy of friendship with all the peoples of the world and reaffirms its intention of establishing diplomatic relations with, among others, the socialist countries of the world. From this moment this Assembly expresses its free and sovereign will to establish relations with the People's Republic of China, therefore rescinding relations with the puppet regime maintained in Formosa [Taiwan] by the Seventh Fleet of the United States.

SIXTH: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People—confident that it is expressing the general opinion of the people of Latin America— affirms that democracy is not compatible with financial oligarchy; with discrimination against blacks; with outrages by the Ku Klux Klan; nor with the persecution that drove scientists like Oppenheimer from their posts, deprived the world for years of the

marvelous voice of Paul Robeson, held prisoner in his own country; and sent the Rosenbergs to their death against the protests of a shocked world, including the appeals of many governments and even Pope Pius XII.

The National General Assembly of the Cuban People expresses the Cuban conviction that democracy does not consist solely of elections that are nearly always managed by rich landowners and professional politicians in order to produce fictitious results, but rather in the right of citizens to determine their own destiny, as this assembly of the people is now doing. Furthermore, democracy will come to exist in Latin America only when people are really free to make choices, when the poor are not reduced— by hunger, social discrimination, illiteracy and the judicial system—to the most wretched impotence.

Therefore, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People:

Condemns the backward and inhuman system of latifundia—large, poorly cultivated holdings of land—a source of misery and poverty for the rural population; condemns the starvation wages and the heartless exploitation of human labor by illegitimate and privileged interests; condemns the illiteracy, the absence of teachers, schools, doctors and hospitals, and the lack of care for the aged that prevail in the countries of the Americas; condemns discrimination against blacks and Indians; condemns the inequality and exploitation of women; condemns the military and political oligarchies that keep our peoples wretched, and hinder the full exercise of their sovereignty and their progress toward democracy; condemns the concession of the natural resources of our countries to foreign monopolies as handouts, disregarding the interests of the people; condemns governments that render homage to Washington while they ignore the sentiments of their own people; condemns the systematic deception of the people by the press and other media serving the interests of political oligarchies and the imperialist oppressor; condemns the monopoly of news by agencies that are the instruments of Washington and of US trusts; condemns repressive laws that deter workers, peasants, students and intellectuals, who together form a majority in every country, from joining together to seek patriotic and social goals; condemns the monopolies and imperialist enterprises that plunder our resources, exploit our workers

and peasants, bleed our economies and keep them backward while subjecting politics in Latin America to their own designs and interests.

Finally, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People condemns:

The exploitation of human beings and the exploitation of underdeveloped countries by imperialist finance capital.

In consequence, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People proclaims before the Americas:

The right of peasants to the land; the right of the workers to the fruit of their labor; the right of children to education; the right of the sick to receive medical and hospital care; the right of youth to a job, the right of students to free education that is both practical and scientific; the right of blacks and Indians to "a full measure of human dignity"; the right of women to civil, social and political equality; the right of the elderly to a secure old age; the right of intellectuals, artists and scientists to fight through their work for a better world; the right of states to nationalize imperialist monopolies as a means of recovering national wealth and resources; the right of countries to engage freely in trade with all other countries of the world; the right of nations to full sovereignty; the right of the people to convert their fortresses into schools and to arm their workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, blacks, Indians, women, the young, the old—all the oppressed and exploited—that they themselves may better defend their rights and their destiny.

SEVENTH: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People affirms:

The duty of workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, blacks, Indians, youth, women, the aged, to fight for their economic, political and social rights; the duty of oppressed and exploited nations to fight for their liberation; the duty of every people to make common cause with all other oppressed, exploited, colonized and afflicted peoples, wherever they are located, regardless of distance or geographical separation. All peoples of the world are brothers!

EIGHTH: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People affirms its faith that Latin America, united and victorious, will soon be free of the bonds that now make its economies rich spoils for US

imperialism; that keep its true voice from being heard at conferences, where cowed ministers form a sordid chorus to the despotic masters. The assembly affirms, therefore, its decision to work for this common Latin American destiny, which will allow our countries to build a true solidarity, founded on the free decision of each and the common goals of all. In this fight for a liberated Latin America there now arises with invincible power—against the obedient voice of those who hold office as usurpers—the genuine voice of the people, a voice that breaks forth from the depths of coal and tin mines, from factories, and sugar mills, from feudal lands where *rotos, cholos, gauchos, jíbaros,* the heirs of Zapata and Sandino, take up the arms of liberty; a voice heard in poets and novelists, in students, in women and in children, in the old and helpless.

To this voice of our brothers and sisters the Assembly of the People of Cuba responds: We are ready! Cuba will not fail!

Cuba is here today to proclaim before Latin America and the world its historic commitment and irrevocable resolution: Homeland or death!

NINTH: The National General Assembly of the Cuban People resolves that this declaration will be known as the “Declaration of Havana.”

Before proceeding to a vote on whether or not to ratify this Declaration by the National General Assembly of the Cuban People, I would like to comment on each of its most important points. This is a historic declaration that will live on as long as there is history in the world. This is the first cry of true, reasoned freedom that a Latin American people has addressed to the entire world. It exposes—and this is important—the true essence of US democracy. It is the “democracy” in which the great black singer and actor Paul Robeson was kept sometimes in prison and sometimes in what those who don’t think like the imperialist oppressors consider a larger prison—the United States— because he was black and because he struggled for recognition of black people’s right to be treated as human beings.

US democracy is the “democracy” that murdered the Rosenbergs but which, before killing them on the charge of espionage, gave them a terrible choice. That husband and wife, honest intellectuals who had earned their

daily bread by working, were condemned to death but could have saved themselves. The only condition—which imperialism always demands—was that they renounce their self-respect. If they had “confessed” that they were the agents of a foreign power, if they had “confessed” to a crime they hadn’t committed, they could have saved themselves. But instead they proclaimed their innocence to the world and were condemned and executed.

That is the essence of US democracy: hypocrisy as the norm for action. That couple left the world a simple, emotional memory when they said that, although they were young, had children, loved life and didn’t want to die, the price they were asked to pay for their lives was too great, and they preferred death. That was the reply of the Rosenbergs, who were condemned in the period when McCarthyism was spreading throughout the United States, condemned because their accusers considered them communists and for being Jews.

US democracy is the setting in which blacks are lynched in the South, a black boy is lynched for having looked too long at a white woman, divisions are established among people and individuals beat and massacre all who oppose them. And it is very clear that, if you approve this resolution of this General Assembly, you will be making the same choice as the Rosenbergs: life is very beautiful, and it’s worth living. But if the price that is asked for life is a people’s honor, then it’s preferable to die. That is the choice that is presented at the end of the Declaration of Havana, stated simply in just three words: Homeland or Death!

Moreover, the Declaration of Havana takes a stand on two of the worst plagues ever to afflict humanity. One is the system of large landholdings, which is intrinsically exploitative, denouncing it in all its forms for being detrimental to self-respect. Furthermore, for the first time in Latin America and before the entire world, basing itself above all on the people, the Declaration of Havana states something that all of us have wanted to hear for many years: it denounces the exploitation of human beings by others and declares that the peoples’ main goal is that such exploitation be completely eliminated, so that nobody exploits even one of the citizens of any country.

That is our goal, the goal for which the best people in the world have struggled for years and years and for which many martyrs have died in every country in the world.

If you, the members of this Assembly of the people of Camagüey, agree with all of the statements in the Declaration of Havana; if you denounce the system of large landholdings; if you denounce self-styled US democracy as false and as something that exploits the peoples; and if you declare that the peoples' main goal is the abolition of the exploitation of human beings by others, raise your hands.

Well, compañeros, the Declaration of Havana has been approved by acclamation. Now, I am going to read you the text of a telegram addressed to our Prime Minister setting forth the conclusions we have reached today, for your approval. If you approve it, the telegram will say the following:

> Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, Prime Minister of the revolutionary government [of Cuba]:
>
> In the same square in which, more than a century ago, Joaquín de Agüero, José Tomás Betancourt, Fernando de Zayas and Miguel Benavides gave their lives fighting for their homeland's social justice and political freedom, the people of Camagüey, constituted in a Provincial General Assembly, resolve: first, to ratify the historic Declaration of Havana in all its points; second, to support its firm stand in the denunciation of US imperialism's exploitation of the underdeveloped peoples of Latin America and the rest of the world; third, to call on the General Assembly of the United Nations to put an end to US imperialism's bellicose plans and thus facilitate the definitive attainment of world peace; and, fourth, to pledge, by the example of Ignacio Agramonte and all the others who gave their lives fighting for our people's happiness, to remain united and determined to defend our homeland's soil against all attacks by "the brutal and turbulent North that scorns us." With the flags of our homeland unfurled, Camagüey proclaims, We Will Win! Homeland or Death!

I submit the text of this telegram for your consideration. Those in favor, raise your hands.

Firmly convinced that this Provincial General Assembly of Camagüey will be followed by others, supported by the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and people as a whole and by the rifles of our revolutionary

army and militias, I declare this first General Assembly of the People of Camagüey concluded.

Now, let’s sing our glorious national anthem.

Farewell to the International Volunteer Work Brigades

September 30, 1960

Compañeros of Cuba and from every country in the world who have come to the foothills of the Sierra Maestra to deliver a message of solidarity with the Cuban revolution:

This is a day of joy and of youth, but also a sad day of farewell. Today, we are bidding farewell to the compañeros from all over the world, who came here to work for the Cuban revolution and to get to know this revolution and its people better. You worked with great youthful revolutionary enthusiasm, and I think that, in addition, you learned about our people: a people like any other, composed of millions of individuals who now constitute a united mass and who are willing and determined to fight to the death to defend their recently acquired rights—to maintain them and to continue advancing toward new achievements.

I would be making a mistake if I were to explain to you compañeros who come from many different parts of the world what a revolution was or if I were to urge you to follow this example as if it were the only one in the world.

This is nothing more—but also nothing less—than a people that has begun a revolution and is very firmly committed to it. Many young people from other parts of the world already know—as the Cubans do—what it is to begin a revolution, and they also know what magnificent results the people obtain when they manage to break the bonds that have held back their development.

Unfortunately, many compañeros from Latin America and other regions represent peoples that haven’t yet begun a revolution. They may not be able

to understand what historical factors gave Cuba—a country no more subjected to colonialism than any other and no more exploited than any other—the strength required to begin the struggle that would break its chains.

It's difficult to explain, in terms of current theories, why it was here in Cuba that the first cry for definitive freedom was raised in Latin America and what it was that enabled us to advance as far as we have. I won't try to explain it. Nor do we claim that the Cuban example is the only way to make the people's most cherished hopes a reality or that this path of struggle is the only way to achieve true happiness, which consists of freedom and economic well-being. However, many of the things that we did here can be done in nearly all the countries that are oppressed—oppressed, colonial and semicolonial, not "underdeveloped," as they call us, because we are not underdeveloped. We are, simply, badly developed, because imperialism, which seized our sources of raw materials a long time ago, set about developing them in line with its own needs.

It is not necessary to give many examples. You know about Cuba's sugar, Mexico's cotton, Venezuela's oil, Bolivia's tin, Chile's copper, Argentina's cattle and wheat, and Brazil's coffee. All have a common denominator: the economies of all these countries are based on a single product (or, at most, two)—and on a single market, as well.

We know, then, that, on the road to liberation, we must struggle first against having a single market and then against having a single product; we must diversify foreign trade and domestic production. Up to here, it's all very simple. The problem lies in how to do this—by parliamentary means, by armed struggle or by a combination of the two? I don't know, nor can I give an exact answer to that question. All I can tell you is that, in Cuba's conditions of imperialist oppression and of oppression by its domestic puppets, the only way out we saw for the Cuban people was that of armed struggle.

To those who, overflowing with technical jargon, ask how much capital is required to begin an agrarian reform, I would say that the only capital you need is the people, armed and aware of their rights. With just that capital we carried out our agrarian reform here in Cuba, deepened it, have continued to advance in it and are setting out on the path of industrialization.

Naturally, the efforts of an entire people can’t be summed up in such a simple formula, because this is a struggle that has already cost much blood and suffering, and which the imperialists are trying to make cost even more. This is why you must unite firmly around those weapons; this is the only way to lead the people to their definitive goals, by uniting uncompromisingly, not allowing anything or anybody to sow division, because, as Martín Fierro said, if brothers fight among themselves, the others will devour them. Imperialism is familiar with this maxim, which the poet adopted from the people; imperialism seeks to divide and conquer. Thus, it divided us into countries producing coffee, copper, oil, tin and sugar, and it also divided us into countries that compete for the market in a single country, constantly lowering prices, so it would be easier for imperialism to defeat our countries one by one.

The maxim that can be applied to one country can also be applied to all countries that aren’t fully developed. We must unite. All the peoples of the world must unite to obtain freedom; economic well-being; confidence that all problems can be solved in the future, and the knowledge that, with enthusiastic, creative daily work, we can reach our goals and that nothing can prevent this.

The imperialist powers exist. You know them, and so do we, because they have exploited us. The compañeros who were born in those countries know them, too, because they have lived inside the monster and know how terrible it is to live in those conditions when you have faith in the human spirit. The peace-loving countries, which are surrounded by nuclear bases and are unable to implement all their plans for development, also know them.

We all know them, which is why we must try to unite in spite of the governments that seek to divide us; we must join together—not only young people, as we did here, but also older adults, the elderly and children—to prevent the most terrible of all the wars with which humankind is threatened and to attain those goals that everyone wants. When the people know all this—and the people aren’t ignorant; they want to unite—all countries whose rulers have sold out will start pressuring many of you, putting you in jail and oppressing you in other ways to make you forget what you have learned in a free country or to make examples of you to keep the timid from taking the path of honor.

This has already happened to people from other Latin American countries who have visited us, and, unfortunately, it will keep happening. Many of you will have difficulties; many of you will be called “the lowest kind of human being, allied to strange foreign oppressors and to the worst enemy”—an enemy which is trying to destroy what they call democracy and the Western way of life. The Western way of life is represented here by the people of Algeria, who are struggling, and by all other oppressed peoples that are struggling and giving their lives to achieve happiness, which they never enjoy.

The path is not an easy one; it is not even easy for those who, like us, have managed to surmount the first obstacle and establish a people’s government. A very difficult stage still lies ahead, one in which the false democracies will punish the people more and more, and the people’s indignation and anger will continue to grow until they are filled with hatred and become a human wave that seizes weapons, fights and takes power. These are the current conditions: sooner or later, the people in the colonial and semicolonial countries—the countries which still bear the yokes of governments that are puppets of imperialist powers—will have to take up arms to establish governments that represent the people and join the other peoples in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe in order to create a better world.

You will see many things. You will see that, though imperialism was caught napping in Cuba, it has woken up; the cries of the people have awakened it. You will see “international” police forces created, in which leadership is given to those who have the most experience in the struggle against communism (in the case of Latin America, the United States), to take up weapons and fight against any country that rebels—or, rather, to arm our Latin American brothers so they will do this under the shameful banner of the Organization of American States. You will see this in Latin America— and soon. You will see this because the people will rebel and because the imperialists will create those armies. But the history of the world will continue, and we—or this generation of our compañeros, if we should die in the struggle—will see that those peoples will win, even against those forces armed by the most powerful country on earth, and will destroy imperialism.

We of this generation will see the world liberated once and for all, even if we have to go through the worst suffering and privations and even if, in their madness, the imperialists unleash a war that will precipitate their own demise. If any of the peoples manages to attain its independence without going through that struggle, the only prescription for development in this struggle is to unite the people and to carry out serious economic and social reforms, using the capital of weapons and the people. It is also very important to educate the people quickly.

We, who have had the rich experience of the Cuban revolution, are thrilled to see our people acquiring greater knowledge, revolutionary faith and revolutionary awareness every day. Here is a simple example of that: you applauded all the delegations from our sister countries here today but applauded three of the delegations with particular fervor, because they are in special situations.

One of these was the delegation representing the people of the United States—a delegation that should never be confused with the US government—a delegation of the people who don't accept racial hatred and don't differentiate among individuals on the basis of the color of their skin, religion or economic position. Another one that you applauded with great fervor, because it represents the opposite pole, was the delegation from the People's Republic of China. So, you applauded the delegations of two peoples whose governments are at loggerheads—one whose government deceives or opposes its people and the other representing a government that has the full support of its people.

You also warmly applauded the Algerian delegation. The people of Algeria are writing another marvelous page in their history, fighting as we had to fight in the mountains, but not, as in our case, against an invasion of their soil by people who had been born there—who, no matter how savage, always respect something. Rather, the Algerians are fighting against invading troops from a foreign country, who have been trained to kill, are steeped in racial hatred and have been educated in the philosophy of war.

Our people also gave generous applause to the delegation representing the people of France, another delegation that does not represent its government.

We ask ourselves: is our people's success in carrying out our revolution due to their grasp of political affairs, as has been shown by their knowledge

of which delegations to applaud the most fervently and in their differentiating between governments and peoples, even at moments such as this, when the Cuban delegation to the United Nations has been subjected to bitter hatred and brutal repression, expressed in both verbal and physical abuse? Was that political knowledge responsible for the revolution? To some extent. The Cuban people are so knowledgeable because they are carrying out the revolution. By exercising their revolutionary rights in the course of these 20 months since the triumph of the Cuban revolution, they have learned everything expressed here, which you, delegates from all over the world, have seen for yourselves on our island.

The first prescription for educating the people is to have a revolution. Never think you can educate a people by means of education alone, with a despotic government still in place; the people must learn to win their rights. First of all, teach the people to win those rights; when they are represented in the government, they will learn everything that you teach them and much more; the people will learn everything effortlessly.

We, who are members of the revolutionary government, which is a part of the people, have learned many things while in office—always asking the people, never divorcing ourselves from them, because a ruler who isolates himself in an ivory tower and tries to direct the people with formulas is a failure and is heading toward despotism.

The people and the government should always be the same thing. Let me tell you, compañeros from other Latin American countries and from colonial countries that haven’t yet won their independence who are visiting us, that you don’t have to know how to read and write to lead the people; if you do know how to read and write, all the better, and, if you’re a philosopher or mathematician, that’s fine, too. But the most important thing you must know for leading the people is how to interpret what they want, and it’s much easier to do this if you’re a part of the people, if you’ve never been isolated from the people by education or any of the other barriers that separate many individuals from the people today.

Therefore, we have a government of workers, peasants and people who knew how to read before—who were in the minority—and have learned the most important things in this struggle.

You can see this here in the Young Rebels. When you listen to Major Joel Iglesias on Sunday, you will learn that this major of the Rebel Army

was only 15 years old when he went to the Sierra Maestra; he barely knew how to read, and he didn't know how to write. Now, he is leading the young people, not because he has become a philosopher in a year and a half, but because he can talk with and is a part of the people and because he feels what all of you feel every day and can express your feelings; he knows how to communicate with you.

If governments consisted of people like these, they would be much better.

Therefore, I congratulate all governments in the world whose leaders have suffered alongside their people; have learned how to read and write in the course of the struggle; and are now, as always, identified with the people.

You came here from all over the world to learn about and work with us; but also, in spite of all the teachings you brought us, those of you who live in countries that haven't gone through this experience yet and who are preparing yourselves for it were able to learn something new, because this is a part of history, and history cannot be changed.

There are many things to be learned from Cuba—not only the good things that you see every day, which show the people's enthusiasm and fervor; you can also learn from the bad things, so that, when the time comes for you to govern, you won't make the same mistakes we've made. Learn that organization should be closely linked to the people's victory and that, the deeper that organization goes, the easier victory will be.

You came here to work, to build a school city, but, when you arrived, not everything was ready. The school city was in recess, and you couldn't finish that small monument to human solidarity that you wanted to leave there. It's a shame, though it's worth just as much to us the way it is as it would have been if you'd built the most beautiful castle; but it's also a lesson that organization is important, that you can't think that revolutionaries are celestial beings that have come to earth through the grace of God, that they simply open their arms and begin the revolution and all problems are solved as soon as they arise, thanks to their enlightenment.

Revolutionaries have to be not only indefatigable workers but also organized. If, instead of learning through the mistakes you make in the struggle—as we have learned—you apply this experience of the need for organization to the revolutionary struggle, it will benefit the countries in

which you fight for the revolution. This is one of the lessons that you can take from here, from this specific example, because we couldn’t offer you a positive experience in this regard. […]

1. See Ernesto Che Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader,* pp. 121-29..

Selected Letters (1960)

Letter to Mr. Ernesto Sábato

Havana
April 12, 1960
Year of the Agrarian Reform

Mr. Ernesto Sábato
Santos Lugares, Argentina

Esteemed Compatriot,

Around 15 years ago, when I met a son of yours, who should be close to 20 years old now, and your wife at a place that I think was called Cabalando, in Carlos Paz, and later, when I read your book *Uno y el universo* [One and the Universe], which fascinated me, I didn't think that you—who possessed what, for me, was the most sacred thing in the world at that time, the title of writer—would, with the passing of time, ask me for a definition, a "task of reunion," as you call it, based on an authority affirmed by many subjective phenomena and some facts.

I have made these preliminary comments only to remind you that, in spite of everything, I belong to the land of my birth and still feel all its joy, desperation and deception deeply. It would be difficult to explain to you why "this" is not the liberating Revolution. I may have to tell you that I saw the quotation marks around the words you denounce right at the beginning, and I identified that word with the same thing that had happened in a Guatemala that I had just left, defeated and nearly disillusioned. All of us whose first participation was in that strange adventure and whose

revolutionary spirit was deepened through our contact with the masses of the peasants, all of us who shared this profound interrelationship during two years of cruel struggle and truly great work felt the same.

You say our revolution couldn't be a "liberating" one, but we were part of a new, people's—not plutocratic—army and used our weapons to destroy the old one. You say our revolution couldn't be a "liberating" one, but our combat banner depicted a tractor breaking the wire fence around a large landholding—now the insignia of our National Institute of Agrarian Reform—not a cow. You say our revolution couldn't be a "liberating" one, but tears of joy ran down the maids' faces the day Batista left and we entered Havana; such manifestations continue; and so do ingenious conspiracies by the Country Club set, who are the same kind of people as the members of the Country Club you know there, who sometimes joined you in your hatred of Peronism.

Here, the intellectuals' submission was much less subtle than in Argentina. Here, the intellectuals were outright slaves; they didn't pretend indifference, as they do there, or intelligence; it was simple slavery at the service of a cause of opprobrium, without any complications; they acted as mere echoes. But all this is nothing more than literature.

To refer you to a book on Cuban ideology, as you did with me concerning Argentina, is to refer you to a year ahead; now, all I can show you is a first attempt—a serious one, perhaps, and eminently practical, as are all the things that inveterate empiricists do—at putting theory to this revolution in this book, *Guerrilla Warfare*. It is almost childish of me to expound what I know by simply putting down one word after another; I don't pretend to explain the great things that disturb you, and the second book that I'm thinking of publishing—if the circumstances in Cuba and abroad don't force me to take up arms again (a task that I disdain as a government official but which excites me as a man who loves adventure)—may not be able to explain them, either. Anticipating what may or may not arrive (the book), I can tell you briefly that this revolution is the most genuine creation of improvisation.

In the Sierra Maestra, impressed by so much improvisation and by how well all the resources adapted to one another and functioned under a central organization, a communist leader who was visiting us said that it was the most perfectly organized chaos in the universe. This revolution is like this

because it advanced much more quickly than its earlier ideology. When all is said and done, Fidel Castro was a bourgeois party's candidate for deputy —the candidate of a party as bourgeois and respectable as the Radical Party in Argentina. It was a party which followed in the footsteps of its deceased leader, Eduardo Chibás, who had characteristics similar to those of Irigoyen. And we, who followed him, were men with little political preparation but plenty of good will and innate honesty. Thus, our watchword was, "In [19]56, we will be either heroes or martyrs." A little earlier, our battle cry— or, rather, Fidel's—had been "Honor against money." We summed up our simple thoughts in simple phrases.

The war revolutionized us. There is no experience more deeply moving for a revolutionary than the act of war. Not the isolated act of killing, of carrying a gun or of fighting in one way or another, but the totality of war—of knowing that an armed man is like a combat unit, is worth the same as any other armed man and does not have to fear other armed men; the leaders' explaining to the defenseless peasants that they can take up arms and showing those soldiers that an armed peasant is worth as much as the best of them; learning that the strength of one is worth nothing if it is not backed by the strength of all; and also learning that revolutionary watchwords must reflect the people's most cherished yearnings and discovering from the people what those yearnings are and making them goals in political work. That was what all of us did, and we learned that the peasants' love of the land was the strongest stimulus of struggle that could be found in Cuba.

Fidel understood many more things; he developed into the extraordinary leader of people that he is today and has become an enormous force for uniting our people. More than anything else, Fidel draws people together; he is a true leader who ends disagreements, destroying them with his disapproval. While some of the politically ambitious tried to use him and others challenged him, all his adversaries feared him. That is how this revolution was born; how its watchwords were created; and how, little by little, theories were developed about reality to create an ideology that came tagging along after the events.

We distributed land in the Sierra Maestra long before we launched our Agrarian Reform Law there. After understanding a series of factors in

practice, we set forth our first, timid law, which didn't tackle the basic need, which was that of suppressing the large landowners.

There were two reasons why the regional press didn't think we were so very bad: first, because Fidel Castro is a very able politician, who didn't publicize his intentions beyond certain limits and was admired by reporters representing the big mass media, who identified with him and took the easy path of sensational reporting; and, second, simply because the US media people, who are really into polls for measuring everything, took one of their polls, added up the scores and pigeonholed him. When, in response to their questions, he said, "We will nationalize the public services," they thought this meant "We won't do this if we receive reasonable support"; when he said, "We will do away with large landholdings," they interpreted this as "We will use the large landholdings as a source of funds for our political campaign or simply keep the money"; and so on.

They never dreamed that what Fidel Castro and our movement said so naively and drastically was really what we planned to do. For them, we were the great confidence trick of the mid-century, because we told the truth while appearing to lie. Eisenhower says we betrayed our principles; this is one interpretation of the truth: what we betrayed was their image of us, as in the story of the lying shepherd—only the other way around. They didn't believe us, either.

Now, we're speaking in a new way, too, because we've continued to advance much more quickly than we've been able to think and structure our thoughts; we're in continuous movement, and theory advances very slowly —so slowly that, after writing (in the few moments of my free time) the manual that I'm sending you, I've discovered that it's almost inapplicable to Cuba. In contrast, it may be applicable to our country [Argentina], only it must be used with intelligence, without any haste or deception. Therefore, I'm hesitant about trying to discover the movement's ideology. When it came time to publish the manual, everybody thought it had been written many years ago.

While situations outside the country are being exacerbated and international tension is mounting, our revolution, in order to survive, must become more radical; and, every time it does so, tension increases, so the revolution has to become even more radical. This is a vicious circle that seems to be spiraling tighter and tighter, approaching the breaking point.

We'll have to wait and see how we get out of this predicament, but I can assure you that the Cuban people are strong, because they have fought and won and know the value of victory; they know what bullets and bombs are, and they also know what oppression is. They will fight with exemplary courage.

At the same time, I assure you that, even though I'm now making a timid gesture in this direction, we won't have theorized very much by then, and we must deal with whatever happens with the agility instilled in us by guerrilla life. At that time, I know that your weapons of an honest intellectual will be aimed against the enemy—our enemy—and that we will have you with us, fighting alongside us, when that time comes.

This letter has been rather long, and it is not entirely free of the affectation that trying to show a thinker that I'm a thinker, too—which I am not— imposes on simple people like me. In any case, I will be glad to hear from you.

Cordially,

Ernesto Che Guevara

Letter to Mr. José Tiquet

Havana
May 17, 1960
Year of the Agrarian Reform

Mr. José Tiquet
Publicaciones Continente, S.A.
Paseo de la Reforma No. 95
Mexico City, D.F.

Dear Friend,

Please forgive me for the delay in replying to you. It was due to lack of time, not negligence.

I would be very pleased to pay for your trip to Cuba, but I don't have the funds to do so. My income is limited to my pay as a major in the Rebel Army—which, in line with the austerity policy of our revolutionary government, is only what is needed to provide us with a decent standard of living.

Far from annoying, your letter pleased me very much.

Yours with affection,

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

Letter to Mr. Gustavo Jiménez

Havana
December 30, 1960
Year of the Agrarian Reform

Mr. Gustavo Jiménez
Nayarit 73
Mexico City 7, D.F.

Dear Gustavo,

I found your affectionate letter, reminding me of old times, waiting for me when I returned from a trip abroad on an official mission for the government, and was very pleased to see it.

My life is developing very differently from how it was in those days. It can be summed up in a single word: work—work, work and more work.

The revolution needs all my time. If you should have the opportunity to visit, you would see how hard I work.

I married a Cuban over a year ago, and we had a daughter last month.

Please give my greetings to your parents.

Very affectionately,

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

1961

Article

This article, published in *Verde Olivo* magazine, April 9, 1961, discusses the historical significance of the Cuban revolution and refutes the argument, including among some sectors of the Latin American left, that the Cuban revolution was an exception and would not be repeated.

Cuba: Historical Exception or Vanguard in the Anticolonial Struggle?

> *The working class is the creative class; the working class produces whatever material wealth exists in a country. And while power is not in their hands, while the working class allows power to remain in the hands of the bosses who exploit them, in the hands of landlords, the speculators, the monopolies and in the hands of foreign and national interest groups, while armaments are in the hands of those in the service of these interest groups and not in their own hands, the working class will be forced to lead a miserable existence no matter how many crumbs those interest groups should let fall from their banquet table.* —Fidel Castro

Never in the Americas has an event of such extraordinary character, with such deep roots and such far-reaching consequences for the destiny of the continent's progressive movements, taken place as our revolutionary war. This is true to such an extent that it has been appraised by some to be the decisive event of the Americas, on a scale of importance second only to that great trilogy—the Russian revolution, the victory over Nazi Germany and

the subsequent social transformations and the victory of the Chinese revolution.

Our revolution, unorthodox in its forms and manifestations, has nevertheless followed the general lines of all the great historical events of this century that are characterized by anticolonial struggles and the transition toward socialism.

Nevertheless some sectors, whether out of self-interest or in good faith, claim to see in the Cuban revolution exceptional origins and features whose importance for this great historical-social event they inflate even to the level of decisive factors. They speak of the exceptionalism of the Cuban revolution as compared to the course of other progressive parties in Latin America. They conclude that the form and road of the Cuban revolution are unique and that in the other countries of the Americas the historical transition will be different.

We accept that exceptions exist which give the Cuban revolution its peculiar characteristics. It is clearly established that in every revolution there are specific factors, but it is no less established that all follow laws that society cannot violate. Let us analyze, then, the factors of this purported exceptionalism.

The first, and perhaps the most important and original, is that cosmic force called Fidel Castro Ruz, whose name in only a few years has attained historic proportions. The future will provide the definitive appraisal of our prime minister’s merits, but to us they appear comparable to those of the great historic figures of Latin America. What is exceptional about Fidel Castro’s personality? Various features of his life and character make him stand out far above his compañeros and followers. Fidel is a person of such tremendous personality that he would attain leadership in whatever movement he participated. It has been like that throughout his career, from his student days to the premiership of our country and as a spokesperson for the oppressed peoples of the Americas. He has the qualities of a great leader, added to which are his personal gifts of audacity, strength, courage, and an extraordinary determination always to discern the will of the people—and these have brought him the position of honor and sacrifice that he occupies today. But he has other important qualities—his ability to assimilate knowledge and experience in order to understand a situation in its entirety without losing sight of the details, his unbounded faith in the

future, and the breadth of his vision to foresee events and anticipate them in action, always seeing farther and more accurately than his compañeros. With these great cardinal qualities, his capacity to unite, resisting the divisions that weaken; his ability to lead the whole people in action; his infinite love for the people; his faith in the future and with his capacity to foresee it, Fidel Castro has done more than anyone else in Cuba to create from nothing the present formidable apparatus of the Cuban revolution.

No one, however, could assert that specific political and social conditions existed in Cuba that were totally different from those in the other countries of the Americas, or that precisely because of those differences the revolution took place. Neither could anyone assert, conversely, that Fidel Castro made the revolution despite a lack of difference. Fidel, a great and able leader, led the revolution in Cuba, at the time and in the way he did, by interpreting the profound political disturbances that were preparing the people for their great leap onto the revolutionary road. Certain conditions were not unique to Cuba but it will be hard for other peoples to take advantage of them because imperialism—in contrast to some progressive groups—does learn from its errors.

The condition we would describe as exceptional was the fact that US imperialism was disoriented and was never able to accurately assess the true scope of the Cuban revolution. This partly explains the many apparent contradictions in US policy.

The monopolies, as is usual in such cases, began to think of a successor for Batista precisely because they knew that the people were opposed to him and were looking for a revolutionary solution. What more intelligent and expert stroke than to depose the now unserviceable little dictator and to replace him with the new “boys” who would in turn serve the interests of imperialism? The empire gambled for a time on this card from its continental deck, and lost miserably.

Prior to our military victory they were suspicious of us, but not afraid. Actually, with all their experience at this game they were so accustomed to winning, they played with two decks. On various occasions emissaries of the US State Department came, disguised as reporters, to investigate our rustic revolution, yet they never found any trace of imminent danger. By the time the imperialists wanted to react—when they discovered that the group of inexperienced young men marching in triumph through the streets of

Havana had a clear awareness of their political duty and an iron determination to carry out that duty—it was already too late. Thus, in January 1959, the first social revolution in the Caribbean and the most profound of the Latin American revolutions dawned.

It could not be considered exceptional in that the bourgeoisie, or at least a part of it, favored the revolutionary war over the dictatorship at the same time as it supported and promoted movements seeking negotiated solutions that would permit them to substitute elements disposed to curb the revolution for the Batista regime. Considering the conditions in which the revolutionary war took place and the complexity of the political tendencies that opposed the dictatorship, it was not at all exceptional that some elements adopted a neutral, or at least a nonbelligerent, attitude toward the insurrectionary forces. It is understandable that the national bourgeoisie, choked by imperialism and the dictatorship—whose troops sacked small properties and made extortion a daily way of life—felt some sympathy when they saw those young rebels from the mountains punish the mercenary army, the military arm of imperialism.

Nonrevolutionary forces did indeed aid the rise of revolutionary power.

A further exceptional factor was that in most of Cuba the peasants had been progressively proletarianized due to the needs of large-scale, semi-mechanized capitalist agriculture. They had reached a new level of organization and therefore a greater class consciousness. In mentioning this we should also point out, in the interest of truth, that the first area in which the Rebel Army operated (comprising the survivors of the defeated column who had come on the *Granma)* was an area inhabited by peasants whose social and cultural roots were different from those of the peasants found in the areas of large-scale, semi-mechanized Cuban agriculture. In fact the Sierra Maestra, the site of the first revolutionary settlement, is a place where peasants who had struggled against large landholders took refuge. They went there seeking new land—somehow overlooked by the state and the voracious landholders—on which to earn a modest income. They struggled constantly against the demands of the soldiers, always allied to the landholders, and their ambitions extended no further than a property deed. The peasants who belonged to our first guerrilla armies came from that section of this social class which most strongly shows love for the land and the possession of it; that is to say, which most perfectly demonstrates

the petit bourgeois spirit. The peasants fought because they wanted land for themselves and their children, to manage and sell it and to enrich themselves through their labor.

Despite their petit bourgeois spirit, the peasants soon learned that they could not satisfy their desire to possess land without breaking up the large landholding system. Radical agrarian reform, the only type that could give land to the peasants, clashed directly with the interests of the imperialists, the large landholders and the sugar and cattle magnates. The bourgeoisie was afraid to clash with those interests, but the proletariat was not. In this way the course of the revolution itself brought the workers and peasants together. The workers supported the demands of the peasants against the large landholders. The poor peasants, rewarded with ownership of land, loyally supported the revolutionary power and defended it against its imperialist and counterrevolutionary enemies.

In our opinion no further exceptionalism can be claimed. We have been generous to extend it this far. We shall now examine the permanent roots of all social phenomena in the Americas: the contradictions that mature in the wombs of present societies and produce changes that can reach the magnitude of a revolution such as Cuba’s.

First, in chronological order although not in order of importance at present, is the large landholding system. It was the economic power base of the ruling class throughout the entire period following the great anticolonial revolutions of the last century. The large landholding social class, found in all Latin American countries, generally lags behind the social developments that move the world. In some places, however, the most alert and clear-sighted members of this class are aware of the dangers and begin to change the form of their capital investment, at times opting for mechanized agriculture, transferring some of their wealth to industrial investment or becoming commercial agents of the monopolies. In any case, the first liberating revolutions never destroyed the large landholding powers that always constituted a reactionary force and upheld the principle of servitude on the land. This phenomenon, prevalent in all the countries of the Americas, has been the foundation of all the injustices committed since the era when the King of Spain gave huge grants of land to his most noble *conquistadores.* In the case of Cuba, only the unappropriated royal lands—

the scraps left between where three circular landholdings met—were left for the natives, Creoles and mestizos.

In most countries the large landholders realized they could not survive alone and promptly entered into alliances with the monopolies—the strongest and most ruthless oppressors of the Latin American peoples. US capital arrived on the scene to exploit the virgin lands and later carried off, unnoticed, all the funds so “generously” given, plus several times the amount originally invested in the “beneficiary” country. The Americas were a field of inter-imperialist struggle. The “wars” between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the separation of Panama from Colombia, the infamy committed against Ecuador in its dispute with Peru, the fight between Paraguay and Bolivia, are nothing but expressions of this gigantic battle between the world’s great monopolistic powers, a battle decided almost completely in favor of the US monopolies following World War II. From that point on the empire dedicated itself to strengthening its grip on its colonial possessions and perfecting the whole structure to prevent the intrusion of old or new competitors from other imperialist countries. This resulted in a monstrously distorted economy, which has been described by the shamefaced economists of the imperialist regime with an innocuous vocabulary revealing the deep compassion they feel for us inferior beings. They call our miserably exploited Indians, persecuted and reduced to utter wretchedness, “little Indians” and they call blacks and mulattoes, disinherited and discriminated against, “colored”—all this as a means of dividing the working masses in their struggle for a better economic future. For all of us, the peoples of the Americas, they have a polite and refined term: “underdeveloped.”

What is underdevelopment?

A dwarf with an enormous head and a swollen chest is “underdeveloped” inasmuch as his weak legs or short arms do not match the rest of his anatomy. He is the product of an abnormal formation distorting his development. In reality that is what we are—we, politely referred to as “underdeveloped,” in truth are colonial, semicolonial or dependent countries. We are countries whose economies have been distorted by imperialism, which has abnormally developed those branches of industry or agriculture needed to complement its complex economy. “Underdevelopment,” or distorted development, brings a dangerous

specialization in raw materials, inherent in which is the threat of hunger for all our peoples. We, the “underdeveloped,” are also those with the single crop, the single product, the single market. A single product the uncertain sale of which depends on a single market imposing and fixing conditions. That is the great formula for imperialist economic domination. It should be added to the old, but eternally youthful Roman formula: *Divide and Conquer!*

The system of large landholding, then, through its connections with imperialism, completely shapes so-called “underdevelopment,” resulting in low wages and unemployment that in turn create a vicious cycle producing ever lower wages and greater unemployment. The great contradictions of the system sharpen, constantly at the mercy of the cyclical fluctuations of its own economy, and provide the common denominator for all the peoples of America, from the Rio Bravo to the South Pole. This common denominator, which we shall capitalize on and which serves as the starting point for analysis by all who consider these social phenomena, is called the People’s Hunger. The people are weary of being oppressed, persecuted, exploited to the maximum. They are weary of the wretched selling of their labor power day after day—faced with the fear of joining the enormous mass of unemployed—so that the greatest profit can be wrung from each human body, profit later squandered in the orgies of the masters of capital.

We see that there are great and inescapable common denominators in Latin America, and we cannot say we were exempt from any of those, leading to the most terrible and permanent of all: the people’s hunger.

Large landholding, whether in its primitive form of exploitation or as a form of capitalist monopoly, adjusts to new conditions and becomes an ally of imperialism—that form of finance and monopoly capitalism that goes beyond national borders—in order to create economic colonialism, euphemistically called “underdevelopment,” resulting in low wages, underemployment and unemployment: the people’s hunger.

All this existed in Cuba. Here, too, there was hunger. Here, the proportion of unemployed was one of the highest in Latin America. Here, imperialism was more ruthless than in many countries of America. And here, large landholdings existed as much as they did in any other Latin American country.

What did we do to free ourselves from the vast imperialist system with its entourage of puppet rulers in each country, its mercenary armies to protect the puppets and the whole complex social system of the exploitation of human beings by others? We applied certain formulas, discoveries of our empirical medicine for the great ailments of our beloved Latin America, empirical medicine which rapidly became scientific truth.

Objective conditions for the struggle are provided by the people's hunger, their reaction to that hunger, the terror unleashed to crush the people's reaction and the wave of hatred that the repression creates. The rest of the Americas lacked the subjective conditions, the most important of which is consciousness of the possibility of victory against the imperialist powers and their internal allies through violent struggle. These conditions were created through armed struggle, which progressively clarified the need for change and permitted it to be foreseen, and through the defeat and subsequent annihilation of the army by the popular forces (an *absolutely necessary condition for every genuine revolution).*

Having already demonstrated that these conditions are created through armed struggle, we have to explain once more that the theater of the struggle should be the countryside. A peasant army pursuing the great objectives for which the peasantry should fight (the first of which is the just distribution of land) will capture the cities from the countryside. The peasant class of Latin America, basing itself on the ideology of the working class, whose great thinkers discovered the social laws governing us, will provide the great liberating army of the future—as it has already done in Cuba. This army, created in the countryside where the subjective conditions for the taking of power mature, proceeds to take the cities, uniting with the working class and enriching itself ideologically. It can and must defeat the oppressor army, at first in skirmishes, engagements and surprises and, finally, in big battles when the army will have grown from a small-scale guerrilla footing to a great popular army of liberation. A vital stage in the consolidation of the revolutionary power, as we have said, will be the liquidation of the old army.

If these conditions present in Cuba existed in the rest of the Latin American countries, what would happen in other struggles for power by the dispossessed classes? Would it be feasible to take power or not? If it was feasible, would it be easier or more difficult than in Cuba?

Let us mention the difficulties that in our view will make the new Latin American revolutionary struggles more difficult. There are general difficulties for every country and more specific difficulties for some whose level of development or national peculiarities are different. We mentioned at the beginning of this essay that we could consider the attitude of imperialism, disoriented in the face of the Cuban revolution, as an exceptional factor. The attitude of the national bourgeoisie was, to a certain extent, also exceptional. They, too, were disoriented and even looked sympathetically upon the actions of the rebels due to the pressure of the empire on their interests—a situation which is indeed common to all our countries.

Cuba has again drawn the line in the sand, and again we see Pizarro's dilemma: On the one hand, there are those who love the people and, on the other, those who hate the people. The line between them divides the two great social forces, the bourgeoisie and the working class, each of which are defining, with increasing clarity, their respective positions as the process of the Cuban revolution advances.

Imperialism has learned the lesson of Cuba well. It will not allow itself to be caught by surprise in any of our 20 republics or in any of the colonies that still exist in the Americas. This means that vast popular struggles against powerful invading armies await those who now attempt to violate the peace of the sepulchers, *pax Romana*. This is important because if the Cuban liberation war was difficult, with its two years of constant struggle, anguish and instability, the new battles awaiting the people in other parts of Latin America will be infinitely more difficult.

The United States hastens the delivery of arms to the puppet governments they see as being increasingly threatened; it makes them sign pacts of dependence to legally facilitate the shipment of instruments of repression and death and of troops to use them. Moreover, it increases the military preparation of the repressive armies with the intention of making them efficient weapons against the people.

And what about the bourgeoisie? The national bourgeoisie generally is not capable of maintaining a consistent struggle against imperialism. It shows that it fears popular revolution even more than the oppression and despotic dominion of imperialism which crushes nationality, tarnishes patriotic sentiment, and colonizes the economy.

A large part of the bourgeoisie opposes revolution openly, and since the beginning has not hesitated to ally itself with imperialism and the landowners to fight against the people and close the road to revolution.

A desperate and hysterical imperialism, ready to undertake any maneuver and to give arms and even troops to its puppets in order to annihilate any country which rises up; ruthless landowners, unscrupulous and experienced in the most brutal forms of repression; and, finally, a bourgeoisie willing to close, through any means, the roads leading to popular revolution—these are the great allied forces directly opposing the new popular revolutions of Latin America.

Such are the difficulties that must be added to those arising from struggles of this kind under the new conditions found in Latin America following the consolidation of that irreversible phenomenon represented by the Cuban revolution.

There are still other, more specific problems. It is more difficult to prepare guerrilla groups in those countries that have a concentrated population in large centers and a greater amount of light and medium industry, even though it may not be anything like effective industrialization. The ideological influence of the cities inhibits the guerrilla struggle by increasing the hopes for peacefully organized mass struggle. This gives rise to a certain “institutionalization,” which in more or less “normal” periods makes conditions less harsh than those usually inflicted on the people. The idea is even conceived of possible quantitative increases in the congressional ranks of revolutionary forces until a point is reached someday allowing a qualitative change.

It is not probable that this hope will be realized given present conditions in any country of the Americas, although a possibility that the change can begin through the electoral process is not to be excluded. Current conditions, however, in all countries of Latin America make this possibility very remote.

Revolutionaries cannot foresee all the tactical variables that may arise in the course of the struggle for their liberating program. The real capacity of a revolutionary is measured by their ability to find adequate revolutionary tactics in every different situation and by keeping all tactics in mind so that they might be exploited to the maximum. It would be an unpardonable error to underestimate the gain a revolutionary program could make through a

given electoral process, just as it would be unpardonable to look only to elections and not to other forms of struggle, including armed struggle, to achieve power—the indispensable instrument for applying and developing a revolutionary program. If power is not achieved, all other conquests, however advanced they appear, are unstable, insufficient and incapable of producing necessary solutions.

When we speak of winning power via the electoral process, our question is always the same: If a popular movement takes over the government of a country by winning a broad, popular vote and resolves as a consequence to initiate the great social transformations that make up the triumphant program, would it not immediately come into conflict with the reactionary classes of that country? Has the army not always been the repressive instrument of that class? If so, it is logical to suppose that this army will side with its class and enter the conflict against the newly constituted government. By means of a more or less bloodless coup d'état, this government can be overthrown and the old game renewed again, never seeming to end. It could also happen that an oppressor army could be defeated by an armed popular reaction in defense and support of its government. What appears difficult to believe is that the armed forces would accept profound social reforms with good grace and peacefully resign themselves to their liquidation as a caste.

Where there are large urban concentrations, even when economically backward, it may be advisable—in our humble opinion—to engage in struggle outside the limits of the city in a way that can continue for a long time. The existence of a guerrilla center in the mountains of a country with populous cities maintains a perpetual focus of rebellion because it is very improbable that the repressive powers will be able, either rapidly or over a long period of time, to liquidate guerrilla groups with established social bases in territory favorable to guerrilla warfare, if the strategy and tactics of this type of warfare are consistently employed.

What would happen in the cities is quite different. Armed struggle against the repressive army can develop to an unanticipated degree, but this struggle will become a direct confrontation only when there is a powerful army to fight against [the enemy] army. A direct confrontation against a powerful and well-equipped army cannot be undertaken by a small group.

For the direct confrontation, many arms will be needed, and the question arises: Where are these arms to be found? They do not appear spontaneously; they must be seized from the enemy. But in order to seize them from the enemy, it is necessary to fight; and it is not possible to fight openly. The struggle in the big cities must therefore begin clandestinely, capturing military groups or weapons one by one in successive assaults. If this happens, a great advance can be made.

Still, we would not dare to say that victory would be denied to a popular rebellion with a guerrilla base inside the city. No one can object on theoretical grounds to this strategy; at least we have no intention of doing so.

But we should point out how easy it would be as the result of a betrayal, or simply by means of continuous raids, to eliminate the leaders of the revolution. In contrast, if while employing all conceivable maneuvers in the city (such as organized sabotage and, above all, that effective form of action, urban guerrilla warfare) and if a base is also maintained in the countryside, the revolutionary political power, relatively safe from the contingencies of the war, will remain untouched even if the oppressor government defeats and annihilates all the popular forces in the city. *It should be relatively safe, but not outside the war, not giving directions from some other country or from distant places. It should be within its own country fighting.* These considerations lead us to believe that even in countries where the cities predominate, the central political focus of the struggle can develop in the countryside.

Returning to the example of relying on help from the military class in effecting the coup and supplying the weapons, there are two problems to analyze: First, supposing it was an organized nucleus and capable of independent decisions, if the military really joins with the popular forces to strike the blow, there would in such a case be a coup by one part of the army against another, probably leaving the structure of the military caste intact. The other problem, in which armies unite rapidly and spontaneously with popular forces, can occur only after the armies have been violently beaten by a powerful and persistent enemy, that is, in conditions of catastrophe for the constituted power. With an army defeated and its morale broken, this phenomenon can occur. For that, struggle is necessary; we always return to the question of how to carry on that struggle. The answer

leads us toward developing guerrilla struggle in the countryside, on favorable ground and supported by struggle in the cities, always counting on the widest possible participation of the working masses and guided by the ideology of that class.

We have sufficiently analyzed the obstacles revolutionary movements in Latin America will encounter. It can now be asked whether or not there are favorable conditions for the preliminary stage, like, for example, those encountered by Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra. We believe that here, too, general conditions can facilitate these centers of rebellion and specific conditions in certain countries exist which are even more favorable. Two subjective factors are the most important consequences of the Cuban revolution: the first is the possibility of victory, knowing that the capability exists to crown an enterprise like that of the group of idealistic *Granma* expeditionaries who successfully struggled for two years in the Sierra Maestra. This immediately indicates there can be a revolutionary movement operating from the countryside, mixing with the peasant masses, that will grow from weakness to strength, that will destroy the army in a direct confrontation, that will capture cities from the countryside, that will strengthen through its struggle the subjective conditions necessary for seizing power. The importance of this fact is demonstrated in the huge number of “exceptionalists” who have recently appeared. “Exceptionalists” are those special beings who say they discover in the Cuban revolution a unique event which cannot be copied—led by someone with few or no faults, who led the revolution through a unique path. We affirm this is completely false.

Victory by the popular forces in Latin America is clearly possible in the form of guerrilla warfare undertaken by a peasant army in alliance with the workers, defeating the oppressor army in a direct assault, taking cities by attacking from the countryside, and dissolving the oppressor army—as the first stage in completely destroying the superstructure of the colonial world.

We should point out a second subjective factor: The masses not only know the possibility of triumph, they know their destiny. They know with increasing certainty that whatever the tribulations of history during short periods, the future belongs to the people; the future will bring about social justice. This knowledge will help raise revolutionary ferment to even greater heights than those prevailing in Latin America today.

Some less general factors do not appear with the same intensity from country to country. One very important one is the greater exploitation of the peasants in Latin America than existed in Cuba. Let us remind those who pretend to see the proletarianization of the peasantry in our insurrectionary stage that we believe it was precisely this that accelerated the emergence of cooperatives as well as the achievement of power and the agrarian reform. This is in spite of the fact that the peasant of the first battles, the core of the Rebel Army, is the same one to be found today in the Sierra Maestra, proud owner of their parcel of land and intransigently individualistic.

There are, of course, characteristics specific to each Latin American country: an Argentine peasant does not have the same outlook as a communal peasant in Peru, Bolivia or Ecuador. But hunger for land is permanently present among the peasants, and they generally hold the key to the Americas. In some countries they are even more exploited than they were in Cuba, increasing the possibility that this class will rise up in arms.

Another factor was Batista's army, which with all its enormous defects, was structured in such a way that everyone, from the lowest soldier to the highest general, was an accomplice in the exploitation of the people. They were complete mercenaries, and this gave the repressive apparatus some cohesiveness. The armies of Latin America generally include a professional officer corps and recruits who are called up periodically. Each year, young recruits leave their homes where they have known the daily sufferings of their parents, have seen them with their own eyes, where they have felt poverty and social injustice. If one day they are sent as cannon fodder to fight against the defenders of a doctrine they feel in their own hearts is just, their capacity to fight aggressively will be seriously affected. Adequate propaganda will enable the recruits to see the justice of and the reasons for the struggle, and magnificent results will be achieved.

After this brief study of the revolutionary struggle we can say that the Cuban revolution had exceptional factors giving it its own peculiarities as well as factors which are common to all the countries of the Americas and which express the internal need for revolution. New conditions will make the flow of these revolutionary movements easier as they give the masses consciousness of their destiny and the certainty that it is possible. On the other hand, there are now obstacles making it harder for the armed masses to achieve power rapidly, such as imperialism's close alliance with the

bourgeoisie, enabling them to fight to the utmost against the popular forces. Dark days await Latin America. The latest declarations of those that rule the United States seem to indicate that dark days await the world: [Patrice] Lumumba [of the Congo], savagely assassinated, in the greatness of his martyrdom showed the tragic mistakes that cannot be committed. Once the anti-imperialist struggle begins, we must constantly strike hard, where it hurts the most, never retreating, always marching forward, counterstriking against each aggression, always responding to each aggression with even stronger action by the masses. This is the way to victory. We will analyze on another occasion whether the Cuban revolution, having taken power, followed these new revolutionary paths with its own exceptional characteristics or if, as in this analysis, while respecting the existence of certain special characteristics, it fundamentally followed a logic derived from laws intrinsic to the social process.

Speeches (1961)

“Economics Cannot be Separated from Politics”

Punta del Este, August 8, 1961

This is Che Guevara’s first intervention on behalf of the Cuban government to the ministerial meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES), sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS) at Punta del Este, Uruguay, on August 8, 1961. Douglas Dillon, head of the US delegation, presented the Kennedy administration’s recently proclaimed “Alliance for Progress” for official ratification by the meeting. The conference was presided over by Uruguayan President Eduardo Haedo.

Mr. President;
Distinguished delegates:
Like all the delegations, we must begin by expressing our appreciation to the government and people of Uruguay for the cordial reception they have given us during this visit.

I would also like to personally thank the distinguished president of this gathering for the gift he made to us of the complete works of Rodó, and would like to explain to him the two reasons why we are not beginning this presentation with a quotation from that great Latin American. The first is that I went back to *Ariel* after many years, looking for a passage that would express, at the present time, the ideas of someone who is, more than a Uruguayan, a man of our Americas, an American from the Río Bravo to the south. But Rodó expresses throughout his *Ariel* the violent struggle and the contradictions of the Latin American peoples against the nation that 50 years ago was already interfering in our economy and in our political freedom. And it was not proper to quote this in someone else’s house.

And the second reason, Mr. President, is that the head of one of the delegations here offered us a quotation from [José] Martí to begin his presentation. Well, we will answer Martí with Martí. But with the anti-imperialist and antifeudal Martí, who died facing Spanish bullets, fighting for the liberty of his homeland and—as he put it in one of his last letters—trying, with Cuba's liberty, to prevent the United States from falling upon the rest of Latin America.

At that international monetary conference to which the distinguished president of the Inter-American Bank referred in his inaugural address when he spoke of the 70 years of waiting, Martí said:

> Whoever speaks of economic union speaks of political union. The nation that buys, commands; the nation that sells, serves. Commerce must be balanced to assure freedom. A nation that wants to die sells to one nation only, and a nation that would be saved sells to more than one. The excessive influence of one country over another's commerce becomes political influence. Politics is the work of men who surrender their feelings to an interest. When a strong nation supplies another with food, she requires that the recipient serve her. When a strong nation wants to engage another in battle, she forces those who have need of her to become her allies and to serve her. A nation that wants to be free must be free in matters of trade. It must distribute its trade among nations that are equally strong. If one is to be preferred, give preference to the one who needs it the least. Let there be neither unions of the Americas against Europe, nor with Europe against a nation of the Americas. Only the mind of some university student could deduce an obligation to political union from the geographic coincidence of our living together in the Americas. Commerce follows the land and sea routes of the earth, going to whatever country has anything to exchange, be it a monarchy or a republic. Let us be in union with the whole world and not with just a part of it, not with one part against another. If the republics of the Americas have any function at all, it is certainly not to be herded by one of them against the future republics.

That was Martí 70 years ago, Mr. President.

Well, having complied with the elementary duty of honoring the dead and of repaying the kindness that the distinguished delegate has shown to us, we pass on to the fundamental part of our presentation: the analysis of why we are here, to characterize the conference. And I must say, Mr. President, that I disagree, in the name of Cuba, with almost all the statements that have been made, although I do not know if I disagree with all the private thoughts of everyone.

I must say that Cuba's interpretation is that this is a political conference. Cuba does not agree that economics can be separated from politics, and understands that they always go together. That is why you cannot have experts who speak of models when the destinies of a people are at stake. And I am also going to explain why this conference is political. It is political because all economic conferences are political; but it is also political because it was conceived against Cuba, and because it has been conceived to counter the example that Cuba represents throughout Latin America.

And if there is any doubt about that, on the 10th, in Fort Amador in the [Panama] Canal Zone, General Decker, while instructing a group of Latin American military men in the art of repressing the people, spoke of the technical conference in Montevideo and said that it had to be backed.

But that is nothing. In the inaugural message on August 5, 1961, President Kennedy asserted: "Those of you at this conference are present at a historic moment in the life of this hemisphere. This is far more than an economic discussion, or a technical conference on development. In a very real sense it is a demonstration of the capacity of free nations to meet the human and material problems of the modern world."

I could continue quoting the prime minister of Peru, where he also refers to political themes; but in order not to tire the distinguished delegates, for I can foresee that my presentation will be a bit long, I will refer to some statements made by the "experts"—a term we place within quotation marks—on Point Five of the draft text.

At the end of page 11, it is stated as a definitive conclusion: "To establish, on a hemispheric and national level, regular consultative procedures with the trade union advisory committees, so that they may play an influential role in the political formulation of programs that might be approved in the special session."

And to drive home my point, so no doubt can remain as to my right to speak of political matters—which is what I plan to do in the name of the Cuban government—here is a quotation from page 7 of that same report on Point Five in question: “Delay in accepting the responsibility of democratic media to defend the essential values of our civilization, without any weakening or commitments of a material sort, would signify irreparable damage to democratic society and the imminent danger of the disappearance of the freedoms enjoyed today, as has occurred in Cuba…”

Cuba is spelled out: “…where today all newspapers, radio, television, and movies are controlled by the absolute power of the government.”

In other words, distinguished delegates, in the report we are to discuss, Cuba is put on trial from a political point of view. Very well then, Cuba will state its truths from a political point of view, and from an economic point of view, as well.

We agree with only one thing in the report on Point Five by the distinguished experts, only one phrase, which defines the present situation: “A new stage is beginning in relations between the peoples of the Americas,” it says, and that is true. Except that the new stage begins under the star of Cuba, free territory of the Americas. And this conference, and the special treatment that the delegations have received, and the credits that may be granted, all bear the name of Cuba, whether the beneficiaries like it or not, because a qualitative change has taken place in the Americas. A country can take up arms, destroy an oppressing army, form a new popular army, stand up to the invincible monster, wait for the monster’s attack, and then defeat it. And this is something new in Latin America, gentlemen, and what makes this new language possible and what makes relations easier between everyone—except, of course, between the two great rivals of this conference.

At this time, Cuba cannot even speak of Latin America alone. Cuba is part of a world that is experiencing intense anguish because we do not know if one of the parts—the weakest, but the most aggressive—will commit the stupid mistake of unleashing a conflict that would necessarily be a nuclear one. Cuba is on the alert, distinguished delegates, because she knows that imperialism would perish enveloped in flames, but that Cuba would also suffer in its own flesh the price of imperialism’s defeat, and she hopes that it can be accomplished by other means. Cuba hopes that her children will

see a better future, and that victory will not have to be won at the cost of millions of human lives destroyed by a nuclear bomb.

The situation of the world is tense. We are not gathered here just for Cuba—not in the least. Imperialism has to protect its rearguard because the battle is being fought on all sides, in a moment of great tension.

The Soviet Union has reaffirmed its decision to sign the Berlin peace treaty, and President Kennedy has announced that he might even go to war over Berlin. But there is not only Berlin; there is not only Cuba; there is Laos; elsewhere there is the Congo, where Lumumba was assassinated by imperialism; there is divided Vietnam; divided Korea; Formosa [Taiwan] in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek's gang; Algeria is bleeding to death, and now they also want to divide it; and there is Tunisia, whose population was machine-gunned the other day for committing the "crime" of wanting to regain their territory.

That is the world today, distinguished delegates. That is how we have to see it in order to understand this conference and draw the conclusions that will permit our peoples either to head toward a happy future of harmonious development, or else become appendages of imperialism in the preparation of a new and terrible war. Or they may shed blood in internal strife when—as almost all of you have foreseen—the people, tired of waiting, tired of being fooled once again, set out on the road that Cuba once took: that of seizing weapons from the enemy army, which represents reaction, and destroying to the very foundations of a whole social order designed to exploit the people.

The history of the Cuban revolution is short in years, Mr. President, but rich in accomplishments, rich in positive accomplishments, and rich also in the bitterness of the aggressions it has suffered.

We will point out a few of them so it may be well understood that a long chain of events leads us here.

In October 1959, the only fundamental economic measure that the revolutionary government had carried out was the agrarian reform. Pirate planes coming from the United States flew over Havana's airspace and as a result of the bombs that they dropped and the fire of our antiaircraft batteries, two people were killed and 50 were wounded. Then there was the burning of the sugarcane fields, which constitutes economic aggression, an aggression against our wealth. The United States denied all responsibility

until a plane blew up—pilot and all—and the origin of those pirate craft was indisputably demonstrated. This time the US government was kind enough to offer an apology. The España sugar mill was also bombed in February 1960 by these planes.

In March of that year, the steamship *Le Coubre*, which was bringing arms and munitions from Belgium, exploded at the Havana docks in an accident that the experts said was intentional and that killed 100 people.

In May 1960, the conflict with imperialism became direct and sharp. The oil companies operating in Cuba, invoking the right of force and scorning the laws of the republic, which clearly specified their obligations, refused to refine the crude oil that we had bought from the Soviet Union, in the exercise of our free right to trade with the whole world and not with just a part of it, as Martí said.

Everyone knows how the Soviet Union responded, by sending us, in a real effort, hundreds of ships to annually transport 3.6 million tons—the total of our crude oil imports—to keep our whole industrial apparatus operating, which today runs on the basis of oil.

In July 1960, there was the economic aggression against Cuban sugar, although some governments have not yet recognized it as such. The conflicts became sharper and the meeting of the OAS took place in August 1960, in Costa Rica. There—in August 1960, I repeat—it was stated: “The intervention or threat of intervention by an extra-continental power in the affairs of the American republics, even when it is invited, is strongly condemned. It is declared that the acceptance by an American state of a threat of extra-continental intervention endangers American solidarity and security, which obligates the Organization of American States to condemn and reject it with equal energy.”

In other words, the sister nations of the Americas, gathered in Costa Rica, denied us the right to be defended. It is one of the strangest denials in the history of international law. Of course, our people are rather disobedient to the dictates of gatherings of experts and they gathered in a great assembly in Havana, approving unanimously—with more than a million hands raised to the sky, one-sixth of the total population of the whole country—what was called the Declaration of Havana, one of whose points states:

> The National General Assembly of the Cuban People—confident that it is expressing the general opinion of the people of Latin America—affirms that democracy is not compatible with financial oligarchy; with discrimination against blacks; with outrages by the Ku Klux Klan; nor with the persecution that drove scientists like Oppenheimer from their posts, deprived the world for years of the marvelous voice of Paul Robeson, held prisoner in his own country; and sent the Rosenbergs to their death against the protests of a shocked world, including the appeals of many governments and even Pope Pius XII.
>
> The National General Assembly of the Cuban People expresses the Cuban conviction that democracy does not consist solely of elections that are nearly always managed by rich landowners and professional politicians in order to produce fictitious results, but rather in the right of citizens to determine their own destiny, as this assembly of the people is now doing. Furthermore, democracy will come to exist in Latin America only when people are really free to make choices, when the poor are not reduced— by hunger, social discrimination, illiteracy and the judicial system—to the most wretched impotence. […]
>
> Finally, the National General Assembly of the Cuban People condemns: the exploitation of human beings and the exploitation of underdeveloped countries by imperialist finance capital.

This was a declaration of our people made before the whole world, to show our resolve to defend with arms, with our blood, and with our lives, our freedom and our right to determine the destiny of our country in the way our people think best.

There followed many skirmishes and battles, verbal at times, with deeds at others, until December 1960 when the Cuban sugar quota in the US market was cut once and for all. The Soviet Union responded in the manner that you know. Other socialist countries did likewise and contracts were signed to sell to the whole socialist area four million tons of sugar, at a preferential price of four cents. That naturally saved the situation for Cuba, which unfortunately is still today as much of a one-crop country as are the majority of the countries of Latin America, and as dependent upon a single market, on a single product—at that time—as the rest of her sister countries are today.

It seemed that President Kennedy was initiating the new era that has been so talked about. And in spite of the fact that the verbal battle had been so intense between President Kennedy and the prime minister of our government, we hoped things would improve. President Kennedy in his speech issued some clear warnings on a range of Latin America issues, but he appeared to publicly accept that the case of Cuba must now be considered as a fait accompli.

We were mobilized at that time, but the day after Kennedy's speech, demobilization was ordered. Unfortunately, on March 13, 1961—the day President Kennedy announced the Alliance for Progress—the pirate attack on our refinery at Santiago de Cuba took place, endangering the installations and taking the life of one of those defending it. We were thus again faced with an accomplished fact.

In that speech, which I have no doubt will be remembered, Kennedy also said that he hoped the peoples of Cuba and the Dominican Republic, for whom he felt great sympathy, could join the community of free nations. Within a month there was Playa Girón [Bay of Pigs invasion], and a few days later President Trujillo was mysteriously assassinated. We were always enemies of President Trujillo; we merely take note of the bare fact, which has not been clarified in any way up to the present time.

Afterward, a true masterpiece of belligerence and political naiveté was prepared, called the White Paper. According to the magazines that chatter so much in the United States—even provoking the ire of President Kennedy — its author is one of the distinguished advisers of the US delegation that is with us today. It is an indictment filled with distortions about Cuban reality, and was conceived to prepare for what was coming.

"The revolutionary regime betrayed their own revolution," said the White Paper, as if it were the judge of revolutions and of how to make revolutions, the great appraiser of revolutions in the Americas. "The Castro regime offers a clear and present danger to the authentic revolutions of the Americas." The word *revolution* also needs the barnacles scraped off it now and then, as one of the members presiding here said.

"The Castro regime refuses to negotiate amicably." This, in spite of our having said many times that we will sit down on an equal basis to discuss our problems with the United States. I take advantage of the opportunity now, on behalf of my government, Mr. President, to state once more that

Cuba is ready to sit down to discuss as equals everything that the US delegation wishes to discuss, but on the strict basis that there be no prior conditions. In other words, our position is very clear on this matter.

The White Paper calls the Cuban people to subversion and to revolution "against the Castro regime." Yet, in spite of this, on April 13 [1961], President Kennedy once more spoke and affirmed categorically that he would not invade Cuba and that the armed forces of the United States would never intervene in Cuba's internal affairs. Two days later, unmarked planes bombed our airports and reduced to ashes the greater part of our ancient air force, the remnants of what Batista's men had left behind when they fled.

In the UN Security Council, Mr. Adlai Stevenson gave emphatic assurances that they were Cuban pilots, from our air force, "unhappy with the Castro regime," who had carried out such a deed. And he stated he had spoken with them.

On April 17, the unsuccessful invasion took place. Our entire people, united and on a war footing, once more demonstrated that there are forces stronger than widespread propaganda, that there are forces stronger than the brutal force of arms, that there are higher values than the value of money. They threw themselves in a mad rush on to the narrow paths that led to the battlefield, many of them massacred on the way by the enemy's superiority in the air. Nine Cuban pilots were the heroes of that struggle, with the old planes. Two of them gave their lives; seven of them are exceptional witnesses to the triumph of freedom's weapons.

The Bay of Pigs invasion was over, and—to be brief, for there is no need to offer proof when the guilty party confesses, distinguished delegates — President Kennedy assumed full responsibility for the aggression. Perhaps at that time he had forgotten the words he had spoken a few days before.

You might think that the history of aggression was over. Nevertheless, I'll give you a scoop, as the newspaper people say. On July 26 of this year, armed counterrevolutionary groups at the Guantánamo Naval Base were waiting for Commander Raúl Castro at two strategic places in order to assassinate him. The plan was intelligent and macabre. They would fire upon Commander Raúl Castro while he was on the road from his house to the mass meeting at which we celebrate the date of our revolution. If they

failed, they would dynamite the foundation, or rather, they would detonate the already dynamited foundations of the stand from which our compañero Raúl Castro would preside over that patriotic meeting. And a few hours later, distinguished delegates, US mortars would begin firing from Cuban territory against the Guantánamo Naval Base. So the whole world would clearly understand the matter: the Cubans, exasperated because in the midst of their personal quarrels one of those "communists over there" was assassinated, were attacking the Guantánamo Naval Base, and the poor United States would have no recourse but to defend itself.

That was the plan our security forces, which are much more efficient than you might imagine, discovered a few days ago.

All that I have just told you is why I believe the Cuban revolution cannot come to this conference of illustrious experts to speak about technical matters. I know that you think, "It is because they do not know about these things." And perhaps you are right. But the fundamental thing is that politics and facts, so obstinate, which are constantly present in our situation, prevent us from coming here to speak about numbers or to analyze the perfections of the CIES specialists.

There are a number of political issues circulating. One of them is a political-economic question: the tractors. Five hundred tractors is not an exchange value. Five hundred tractors is what our government estimates would allow it to repair the material damage caused by the 1,200 mercenaries. They do not pay for a single life because we are not accustomed to placing a dollar value on the lives of our citizens, or a value on equipment of any kind. And much less on the lives of the children who died there, of the women who died there at the Bay of Pigs.

But we want to make it clear that if the exchange of human beings—those [captured during the Bay of Pigs invasion] we call *gusanos* [worms]—for tractors seems to be an odious transaction, something from the days of piracy, we could make an exchange of human beings for human beings. We direct our remarks to the gentlemen from the United States. We reminded them of the great [Puerto Rican] patriot Pedro Albizu Campos, on the verge of death after being in a dungeon of the empire for years and years, and we offered them whatever they wanted for the freedom of Albizu Campos. We reminded the nations of the Americas who might have

political prisoners in their jails that we could make an exchange. No one responded.

Naturally, we cannot force that exchange. It is simply up to those who think that the freedom of those “valiant” Cuban counterrevolutionaries—the only army in the world that surrendered in its entirety, with almost no losses—whoever thinks that these individuals should be set free, let them set free their own political prisoners. Then all the jails of the Americas will be resplendent, or at least their political prisons will be empty.

There is another problem, also of a political-economic nature. This is, Mr. President, that our air transport fleet is being brought, plane by plane, to the United States. The procedure is simple: a few ladies enter a plane with guns hidden in their clothing, they hand them over to their accomplices, the accomplices murder the guard, they put a gun to the pilot’s head, the pilot heads for Miami, and a company, legally of course—because in the United States everything is done legally—files a suit for debts against the Cuban government, and then the plane is confiscated.

But it so happens that among those many Cuban patriots—and in addition there was a US patriot, but he is not ours—there was a Cuban patriot [in the United States]. And he, all by himself, without anyone telling him anything, decided to better the record of the hijackers of the two-engine planes, and he brought to Cuban shores a beautiful four-engine plane. Naturally, we are not going to use this four-engine plane, which is not ours. We respect private property, but we demand the right to be respected in kind, gentlemen. We demand an end to shams; the right for there to be organizations in the Americas that can say to the United States: “Gentlemen, you are committing a vulgar outrage. You cannot take the planes of another country even though it may be opposed to you. Those planes are not yours. Return those planes, or sanctions will be imposed against you.”

Naturally we understand that, unfortunately, there is no inter-American body strong enough to do this. Nevertheless, in this august conclave, we appeal to the sense of fairness and justice of the US delegation, in order to normalize the situation with regard to the hijacking of our respective planes.

It is necessary to explain what the Cuban revolution is, what this special event is that has made the blood of the world’s empires boil, and that has also made the blood of the dispossessed of the world, or of this part of the

world at least, boil with hope. It is an agrarian, antifeudal and anti-imperialist revolution that under the imperatives of its internal evolution and of external aggressions became transformed into a socialist revolution, and that declares itself as such before all the Americas: a socialist revolution.

A socialist revolution that took the land from those who had plenty and gave it to those who used to be hired to work that land, or distributed it in cooperatives among other groups of people who had no land on which to work, even as hired hands.

It is a revolution that came to power with its own army and on the ruins of the oppressor's army; a revolution that looked around when it came to power and dedicated itself to the systematic destruction of all the old forms of the structure that upheld the dictatorship of an exploiter class over the exploited class. It destroyed the army completely, as a caste, as an institution—not as men, except for the war criminals who were shot before a firing squad; this, too, was done openly before the public opinion of the continent and with a clear conscience.

It is a revolution that has reaffirmed national sovereignty and that, for the first time, has called in its own name, and in the name of all the peoples of the Americas and of the world, for the return of all territories unjustly occupied by foreign powers.

It is a revolution that has an independent foreign policy, that comes here to this meeting of American states as one more Latin American country, that goes to the meeting of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries as one of its important members, and that participates in the deliberations of the socialist countries and is considered by them to be a fraternal nation.

It is, then, a revolution with humanist characteristics. It is in solidarity with all the oppressed peoples of the world. It is in solidarity, Mr. President, because as Martí also said: "Every true human must feel on their own cheek every blow dealt against the cheek of another." And every time that an imperialist power subjugates a territory, it is a blow against every inhabitant of that territory.

That is why we struggle for the independence of other countries, for the independence of the occupied territories, indiscriminately, without asking about the political regime or about the aspirations of those who fight for their independence. We support Panama, which has a piece of its territory

occupied by the United States. We call the islands near the south of Argentina the Malvinas and not the Falkland Islands. And we call the island that the United States snatched from Honduras and from which it is insulting us over radio and telegraph, Swan Island.

Here in the Americas we are constantly fighting for the independence of the Guyanas and the British Antilles. We accept the fact of an independent Belize because Guatemala has already renounced its sovereignty over that piece of its territory. And we also fight in Africa, in Asia, in any part of the world where the strong oppress the weak, so that the weak may achieve independence, self-determination, and the right to self-rule as a sovereign state.

Permit us to say that, when the earthquake struck Chile, our people came to her aid to the extent of our resources, with our only product, sugar. It was a small amount of aid, but nevertheless it was a type of aid for which nothing was demanded in return. It was simply handing over to a sister nation some food to tide her over those anxious hours. Nor does that country have to thank us, and much less does she owe us anything; it was our duty to give what we gave.

Our revolution nationalized the domestic economy; it nationalized basic industry, including mining. It nationalized all foreign trade, which is now in the hands of the state, and which we proceeded to diversify by trading with the whole world. It nationalized the banking system in order to have in its hands the efficient instrument with which to exercise the function of credit in accordance with the country’s needs.

It provides for the participation of the workers in the management of the planned national economy. It carried out the urban reform just a few months ago, through which every inhabitant of the country was made the owner of the home they occupied on the sole condition that they continue to pay the same rent that they were already paying, in accordance with a table, for a set number of years.

It instituted many measures to affirm the dignity of the human being. Among the first of these was the abolition of racial discrimination, which existed in our country, distinguished delegates, in a somewhat subtle form, but it existed. The beaches of our island were not for blacks or the poor to swim at because they belonged to some private club visited by tourists who did not like to swim with black people.

Our hotels—Havana's great hotels, which were built by foreign companies—did not allow black people as guests, because tourists from other countries did not like it.

That is the way our country was. A woman did not have anything approaching equal rights; she was paid less for the same work; she was discriminated against, as she is in the majority of our countries.

The city and the countryside were in perpetual conflict, and from that conflict imperialism drew a workforce, which was paid poorly and denied steady work.

In all these areas we carried out a revolution, and we also carried out a true revolution in education, culture and health care. This year illiteracy will be eliminated in Cuba. Some 104,000 literacy volunteers of all ages are spread throughout the Cuban countryside teaching reading and writing to 1.25 million illiterates, because in Cuba there were many illiterates. There were 1.25 million illiterates, many more than the official statistics used to report.

This year primary education has been made compulsory through the ninth grade, and secondary education has been made free and compulsory for the whole school-age population. We have converted the fortresses into schools. We have carried out university reform and have given the entire population free access to higher culture, to science and modern technology. We have greatly promoted national values to overcome the cultural deformation produced by imperialism, and our art receives the applause of the peoples of the world—not all the peoples, since in some places they are not allowed to enter. We have promoted the cultural heritage of Latin America through the awarding of annual prizes to writers from all latitudes of the Americas—and whose poetry prize, Mr. President, was won by the [Uruguayan] poet laureate, Roberto Ibañez, in the last contest. We have extended the social function of medicine to benefit the peasants and the poor urban workers. Everyone has access to sport, to the extent that on July 25, 75,000 people marched in a sports celebration given in honor of the world's first cosmonaut, Commander Yuri Gagarin. Popular beaches have been opened to all, of course, without distinction of color or ideology, and free besides. And the exclusive social clubs of our country, of which there were many, were transformed into workers' social clubs.

All right, gentlemen experts, fellow delegates, the time has come to address the economic section of the text. Point One is very broad. Prepared by very smart experts, it aims at planning the social and economic development of Latin America.

I am going to refer to some of the statements of the gentlemen experts in order to refute them from the technical point of view, and then present the Cuban delegation's viewpoint on what development planning is.

The first incongruity that we observe in this work is expressed in this passage:

> Sometimes the idea is expressed that an increase in the level and diversity of economic activity necessarily results in the improvement of sanitary conditions. Nevertheless, the group is of the opinion that the improvement of sanitary conditions is not only desirable *per se*, but that it constitutes an indispensable prerequisite to economic growth, and that it should therefore form an essential part of the programs for the development of the region.
>
> On the other hand, this is also reflected in the structure of the loans granted by the Inter-American Development Bank, for in the analysis that we made of the $120 million loaned in the first period, $40 million, in other words one-third, corresponds directly to loans of this type; for housing, for aqueducts, for sewers.

This is a bit like… I don't know, but I would almost classify it as a colonial mentality. I get the impression they are thinking of making the latrine the fundamental thing, that latrines would improve the social conditions of the poor Indian, of the poor black, of the poor person who lives in subhuman conditions. "Let's make latrines for them and after we have made latrines for them, and after their education has taught them how to keep themselves clean, then they can enjoy the benefits of production." Because it should be noted, distinguished delegates, that the topic of industrialization does not figure in the analysis of the distinguished experts. Planning for the gentlemen experts is the planning of latrines. As for the rest, who knows how it will be done!

If the president will allow me, I will express my deepest regrets in the name of the Cuban delegation for the loss of the services of such an

efficient specialist as the one who directed this first group, Dr. Felipe Pazos. With his intelligence and capacity for work, and with our revolutionary activity, within two years Cuba could have become the paradise of the latrine, even if we did not have a single one of the 250 factories that we are beginning to build, even if we had not carried out the agrarian reform.

I ask myself, distinguished delegates, if they are not trying to make fun of us—not Cuba, because Cuba is not included, since the Alliance for Progress is not for Cuba but against her, and since it is not established to give one cent to Cuba—but if they are not trying to make fun of all the rest of the delegates.

Do you get the impression, just a little, that your leg is being pulled? You are given dollars to build highways, you are given dollars to build roads, you are given dollars to dig sewers. Gentlemen, what do you build roads with, what do you dig the sewers with, what do you build houses with? You don't have to be a genius for that. Why don't they give dollars for equipment, dollars for machinery, dollars so that our underdeveloped countries, all of them, can become industrial-agricultural countries, at one and the same time? Really, it is sad.

On page 10, in the part about development planning under Point Six, it is made evident who the real author of this plan is. Point Six says: "To establish more solid bases for the granting and utilization of external financial aid, especially to provide effective criteria to evaluate individual projects."

We are not going to establish the most solid foundations for granting and utilization because we are not the ones granting; you are the ones who are receiving, not granting. We, Cuba, are watching, and it is the United States that is making the grants. This Point Six, then, is drafted directly by the United States. It is the recommendation of the United States, and this is the spirit of the whole abortive scheme called Point One.

But I want to impress upon you one thing. We have spoken a good deal about politics. We have denounced what is a political plot here. We have emphasized in conversations with the distinguished delegates Cuba's right to express these opinions, because Cuba is directly attacked in Point Five. Nevertheless, Cuba does not come here to sabotage the meeting, as some of the newspapers or many of the mouthpieces of the foreign information agencies are claiming.

Cuba comes to condemn what is worthy of condemnation from the point of view of principles. But Cuba also comes to work harmoniously, if possible, in order to straighten out this thing that has been born so distorted, and Cuba is ready to collaborate with all the distinguished delegates to set it right and make it into a beautiful project.

The honorable Mr. Douglas Dillon in his speech cited financing; that is important. We must speak of financing if we are all to get together and speak of development, and we have all assembled here to talk with the one country that has the capital for financing.

Mr. Dillon says: “Looking at the years to come and at the sources of external financing—international entities such as Europe and Japan as much as the United States; new private investments and investments of public funds—if Latin America takes as a precondition the necessary internal measures, it can logically expect that its efforts…” He does not even say, “if it takes these measures this will happen,” but only “it can logically expect”! He continues, “…will be matched by an influx of capital on the order of at least $20 billion in the next 10 years, with the majority of these funds coming from official sources.”

Is this how much there is? No, only $500 million are approved; this is what is being talked about. This must be emphasized because it is the nub of the question. What does it mean? And I assure you that I’m not asking this for us, but for the good of all. What does it mean, “if Latin America takes the necessary internal measures”? And what does “it can logically expect” mean?

I think that later in the work of the committees, or at a time that the representative of the United States deems opportune, this detail should be cleared up a little, because $20 billion is an interesting sum. It is no less than two-thirds of the figure that our prime minister announced as necessary for the development of the Americas; push it a little more and we arrive at $30 billion. But that $30 billion has to arrive in jingling cash, dollar by dollar, into the national coffers of each one of the countries of the Americas, with the exception of this poor Cinderella, who probably will receive nothing.

That is where we can help, but not as part of a blackmail, such as is foreseen. It is said: “Cuba is the goose that lays the golden egg. Cuba exists, and while there is a Cuba, the United States will continue to give.” No, we

do not come here for that reason. We come to work, to try and struggle on the level of principles and ideas, for the development of our peoples. Because all, or nearly all, the distinguished representatives have said it: if the Alliance for Progress fails, nothing can hold back the wave of popular movements—I say this in my own words, but that is what was meant. Nothing can hold back the wave of popular movements if the Alliance for Progress fails. And we are interested in it not failing, if and insofar as it means a real improvement for Latin America in the standard of living of all its 200 million inhabitants. I can make this statement honestly and with all sincerity.

We have diagnosed and foreseen the social revolution in the Americas, the real one, because events are unfolding in a different way, because there is an attempt to hold the people back with bayonets, and when the people realize that they can take the bayonets and turn them against those who brandish them, then those who brandish them are lost. But if the road the people want to take is one of logical and harmonious development, through long-term loans with low interest, as Mr. Dillon said, with 50 years to pay, we also are in agreement.

The only thing, distinguished delegates, is that we all have to work together here to make that figure concrete, and to make sure that the US Congress approves it. Because do not forget that we are faced with a presidential and parliamentary regime, not a “dictatorship” like Cuba, where a representative of Cuba stands up, speaks in the name of his government, and takes responsibility for his actions. What is said here also has to be ratified over there, and the experience of all the distinguished delegates is that many times the promises made here were not approved there.

Well, what I have to say on each of these points is very long, and I’ll shorten it so that we can discuss them in the commissions in a fraternal spirit. These are simply some general facts, some general considerations.

The rate of growth presented as a most beautiful thing for all Latin America is a 2.5 percent net growth. Bolivia announced 5 percent for 10 years. We congratulate the representative of Bolivia and say to him that with just a little effort and the mobilization of the popular forces he could say 10 percent. We speak of 10 percent growth with no fear whatsoever; 10 percent growth is the rate that Cuba foresees for the coming years.

What does this indicate, distinguished delegates? That if each country maintains its current course Latin America as a whole—which today has a per capita income of approximately $330 and a 2.5 percent annual growth rate—by around the year 1980 will have a per capita income of $500. Certainly for many countries that is quite phenomenal.

What does Cuba intend to have by the year 1980? A net income per capita of around $3,000; this is more than the United States currently has. And if you do not believe us, fine, here we are ready for a competition, gentlemen. Let us be left in peace. Let us be allowed to develop, so that we can come together again in 20 years to see if the siren song is revolutionary Cuba's or someone else's. But we are announcing, quite responsibly, that rate of annual growth.

The experts suggest the substitution of well-equipped farms for inefficient latifundia and very small farms. We say: Do they want to make an agrarian reform? Take the land from those who have a lot and give it to those who do not have any. That is the way to make an agrarian reform. The rest is a siren song. The way to do it? Whether a piece of land is given out in parcels, in accord with all the rules of private property; whether it is transformed into collective property; whether these are combined, as we have done—all that depends on the peculiarities of each nation. But agrarian reform is carried out by eliminating the latifundia, not by sending people to colonize far-off places.

In the same way I could talk about the redistribution of income, which is a reality in Cuba. Those who have more have it taken away and those who have nothing or very little are allowed to have more. Because we have made the agrarian reform. Because we have made the urban reform. Because we have reduced electricity and telephone rates—which, by the way, was the first skirmish with the foreign monopolies. Because we have made social centers for workers and child-care centers, where the children of the workers go to receive food and stay there while their parents work. Because we have created public beaches. And because we have nationalized education, which is absolutely free. In addition, we are working on an extensive health plan.

I shall speak of industrialization separately, because it is the basic foundation for development and we interpret it as such.

But there is one point that is very interesting—it is the filter, the purifier: the experts, I think there were seven—the danger of the "latrinocracy" stuck in the middle of the agreements with which the peoples want to improve their living standards. Once again, politicians in the guise of specialists, saying here, yes, and here, no. Because you have done such and such a thing, yes, but in reality because you are a willing tool of the one who is handing out the favors. And nothing for you because you have done this wrong, but in reality because you are not a tool of the one handing out the favors— because you say, for example, that you cannot accept as the price of any loan that Cuba be attacked.

That is the danger, without mentioning that the small countries, as in everything, are the ones who receive little or nothing. Distinguished delegates, there is only one place where the small countries have the right to "make a fuss," and that is here, where each vote is one vote, and where this question has to be put to a vote. And the small countries, if they have a mind to, can count on the militant vote of Cuba against the measures of the "seven," measures that are "sterilized," "purified," and aimed at channeling credits, with technical disguises, in another direction.

What is the situation that really leads to genuine planning, planning that must be coordinated with everyone, but which cannot be subject to any supranational body?

We understand—and we did it this way in our country, distinguished delegates—that the precondition for real economic planning is for political power to be in the hands of the working class.

That is the *sine qua non* of genuine planning for us. Moreover, the total elimination of imperialist monopolies and state control of the fundamental productive activities are necessary. Having those three points well nailed down, you then proceed with the planning of economic development. Otherwise, everything will be lost in words, speeches and meetings.

Besides this, there are two requirements that will decide whether or not this development makes use of the potential lying dormant in the heart of the peoples, now waiting to be awakened. These are, on the one hand, the rational, centralized direction of the economy by a single authority, which has the ability to make decisions (I'm not speaking of dictatorial powers, but the power to decide) and, on the other, the active participation of all the people in the tasks of planning.

Naturally, for the entire people to participate in the tasks of planning, they will have to own the means of production. Otherwise, it will be difficult for them to participate. The people will not want to, and it seems to me that the owners of the enterprises where they work will not want them to either.

Now, we can speak for a few minutes about what Cuba has achieved by trading with the whole world, "following the flow of commerce," as Martí said.

To date, we have signed agreements for $357 million in credits with the socialist countries, and we are in negotiations, real negotiations, for a little over $140 million more, which makes a total in loans of $500 million for the next five years.

That loan, which gives us the ownership and control of our economic development, comes to, as we said, $500 million—the sum that the United States is giving to all of Latin America—just for our little republic. This, divided by the population of the Republic of Cuba and translated to Latin America, would mean that the United States, in order to provide an equivalent amount, would have to give 15 billion pesos in five years, or $30 billion in 10 years—I speak of pesos or dollars, because in our country their value is the same. That is the sum that our prime minister asked for. With that amount, if there were a proper leadership of the economic process, Latin America in only five years would be quite a different place.

We now pass on to Point Two of the text. And naturally, before analyzing it, we will ask a political question. Some friends of ours at these meetings—of whom there are many, although it might not appear that way—were asking us if we were ready to come back into the fold of Latin American nations. We have never abandoned the Latin American nations, and we are struggling not to be expelled, not to be forced to leave the fold of Latin American republics. What we do not want is to be a herd of cattle, as Martí said. Simply that.

We denounced the dangers of the economic integration of Latin America because we are familiar with the example of Europe. In addition, Latin America knows from bitter experience what European economic integration has cost. We denounced the danger of the international monopolies completely manipulating trade relations inside the free trade associations. But we also announce here, to this conference, and we hope

we are accepted, that we are willing to join the Latin American Free Trade Association, like any other member, also criticizing when necessary, but complying with all the rules, as long as Cuba's particular economic and social organization is respected and as long as its socialist government is accepted as an accomplished and irreversible fact.

In addition, equal treatment and equitable enjoyment of the advantages of the international division of labor must also be extended to Cuba. Cuba must participate actively and can contribute a great deal to alleviate many of the serious bottlenecks that exist in the economies of our countries, with the aid of the centrally managed, planned economy, and with a clear and defined goal.

Nevertheless, Cuba also proposes the following measures: We propose the initiation of immediate bilateral negotiations for the evacuation of bases or territories in member countries occupied by other member countries, so that there are no more cases like the one reported by the delegation from Panama, where Panama's wage policy cannot be implemented in a piece of her own territory. The same is happening to us, and, speaking from the economic point of view, we would like to see that anomaly disappear.

We propose the study of rational plans for development and the coordination of technical and financial assistance from all the industrialized countries, without ideological or geographic distinctions of any kind. We also propose that guarantees be obtained to safeguard the interests of the weaker member countries; the banning of acts of economic aggression by some members against others; the guarantee of protection of Latin American entrepreneurs against the competition of foreign monopolies; the reduction of US tariffs on industrial products of the integrated Latin American countries.

And we state that, as we see it, foreign financing should take place only through indirect investments that fulfill the following conditions: that they not be subject to political demands or discriminate against state enterprises; that they be allotted in accord with the interests of the receiving country; that they carry interest rates no higher than three percent, with repayment in no less than 10 years, and renewable in case of difficulties with the balance of payments; that the attachment or confiscation of ships and aircraft by one member country against another be banned; that tax reforms be initiated

that do not fall upon the working masses and that are protection against the action of foreign monopolies.

Point Three of the text has been treated with the same delicacy as the others by the distinguished experts: they have taken up the matter with two delicate little tweezers, raised the veil a little bit, and let it fall immediately, because it is a tough one.

> It would have been desirable—*they say*—and even tempting for the group to have formulated ambitious and spectacular recommendations. However, this was not done owing to the numerous complex technical problems that would have had to be resolved. That is why the recommendations that are formulated necessarily had to be limited to what was considered technically feasible.

I do not know if I'm being too shrewd, but reading between the lines, there do not seem to be any pronouncements. The Cuban delegation therefore proposes concretely that from this meeting we should obtain the following: a guarantee of stable prices, without any "coulds" or "might haves," without "we would examine" or "we shall examine," but, simply, guarantees of stable prices; expanding, or at least stable, markets; guarantees against economic aggression; guarantees against the unilateral suspension of purchases in traditional markets; guarantees against the dumping of subsidized agricultural surpluses; guarantees against protectionism aimed at the production of primary materials; and the creation of conditions in the industrialized countries for the purchase of primary materials with a greater degree of processing.

Cuba declares that it would be desirable for the US delegation to answer, in the commissions, whether it will continue to subsidize its production of copper, lead, zinc, sugar, cotton, wheat and wool. Cuba asks whether the United States will continue to apply pressure against member countries to prevent them from selling their surplus primary products to the socialist countries and thus broadening their market.

And now comes Point Five of the text, since Point Four is nothing but a report. This Point Five is the other side of the coin.

Fidel Castro said at the time of the Costa Rica conference that the United States had gone there "with a sack of gold in one hand and a club in

the other.” Here today, the United States comes with the sack of gold—fortunately even bigger—in one hand, and the barrier to isolate Cuba in the other. It is, anyway, a triumph of historical circumstances.

But Point Five of the text establishes a program of measures for Latin America aimed at the regimentation of thought, the subordination of the trade union movement and, if possible, the preparation of military aggression against Cuba.

Three steps are contemplated throughout the whole document: the mobilization, beginning immediately, of the Latin American mass media against the Cuban revolution and against the struggles of our peoples for their freedom; the formation at a later meeting of an inter-American federation of press, radio, television and cinema, which would allow the United States to direct the policy of all the organs of public opinion in Latin America, of all of them—there are not many now that are outside their sphere of influence, but they want all of them. In addition, they want to exercise monopoly control over new information agencies and to absorb as many of the old ones as possible.

All this in order to do something unprecedented, which has been announced here with such tranquility and which in my country provoked deep discussion when something similar was done in only one case. They are attempting, distinguished delegates, to establish a cultural common market, organized, managed, paid for, and domesticated. All the culture of Latin America at the service of imperialism’s propaganda machine to demonstrate that the hunger of our peoples is not hunger at all, but laziness. Magnificent!

Confronted with this, we reply: a call must be made to the organs of public opinion in Latin America that they take up and share in the ideals of national liberation of each Latin American people. There must be a call for the exchange of information, cultural media, organs of the press and the attainment of direct visits without discrimination between our peoples, gentlemen, because today a US citizen who goes to Cuba faces five years in prison when they return to their country. A call must be made to the Latin American governments for them to guarantee the freedoms that allow the working class movement to organize independent trade unions, to defend the interests of the workers, and to struggle for the true independence of its peoples. And we call for a total, absolute condemnation of Point Five as an

attempt by imperialism to domesticate the one thing that our peoples had been saving from disaster: the national culture.

Distinguished delegates, permit me to give an outline of the objectives of Cuba's first plan of economic development for the next four-year period. The overall rate of growth will be 12 percent, that is to say, more than 9.5 percent net per capita growth, transforming Cuba into the most industrial country in Latin America in relation to its population, as the following data indicates:

First place in Latin America in per capita production of steel, cement, electrical energy and, except for Venezuela, oil refining. First place in Latin America in tractors, rayon, footwear, textiles, etc. Second place in the world in the production of metallic nickel (up until now Cuba had only produced concentrates); the production of nickel in 1965 will be 70,000 metric tons, which constitutes approximately 30 percent of the world's production. In addition, Cuba will produce 2,600 metric tons of metallic cobalt. The production of 8.5 to 9 million tons of sugar. The beginning of the transformation of the sugar industry into a sucro-chemical industry.

In order to accomplish these measures—which are easy to list but demand enormous work and the effort of an entire people in order to succeed, plus a great deal of external financing for the purpose of aid and not exploitation—the following measures have been taken: more than a billion pesos (the Cuban peso is equivalent to the dollar) are going to be invested in industry in the installation of 800 megawatts of electrical generating capacity. In 1960, the installed capacity—not counting the sugar industry, which works seasonally—was 621 megawatts. Building or expanding 205 factories, among which the following 22 are the most important: a new plant to refine metallic nickel, which will raise the total to 70,000 tons; a petroleum refinery with a capacity of two million tons of crude oil; the first steel plant, for 700,000 tons, which in this four-year period will produce 500,000 tons of steel; the expansion of our seamed steel-pipe plants to produce 25,000 metric tons; tractors, 5,000 units annually; motorcycles, 10,000 units annually; three cement plants and the expansion of the existing ones for a total of 1.5 million metric tons, which will raise our production to 2.5 million tons annually; metal containers: 291 million units; expansion of our glass factories to 23,700 metric tons annually; a million square meters of window glass; a new factory for

making 10,000 cubic meters of plywood from bagasse; a plant for making 60,000 metric tons of bagasse cellulose, in addition to one for wood cellulose of 40,000 metric tons annually; a 60,000-ton ammonium nitrate plant; 60,000 tons of simple superphosphate; 81,000 metric tons of triple superphosphate; 132,000 metric tons of nitric acid; 85,000 metric tons of ammonia; eight new textile plants and the expansion of the existing ones with 451,000 spindles; a kenaf sack factory producing 16 million sacks. And there are other factories of less importance, for a total of 205 to date.

These credits have been contracted for, up until now, in the following way: $200 million with the Soviet Union; $60 million with the People's Republic of China; $40 million with the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia; $15 million with the Rumanian People's Republic; $15 million with the Hungarian People's Republic; $12 million with the Polish People's Republic; $10 million with the German Democratic Republic and $5 million with the Bulgarian Democratic Republic. The total contracted for to date is $357 million. The new negotiations that we expect will shortly conclude are mostly with the Soviet Union, which, as the most industrialized country in the socialist area, is the one that has offered the most extensive support.

In terms of agriculture, Cuba has set itself the goal of reaching self-sufficiency in the production of food, including fats and rice, not wheat; self-sufficiency in cotton and coarse fibers; the creation of exportable surpluses of tropical fruits and other agricultural products, whose contribution to exports will triple the present levels.

As regards foreign trade: the value of exports will increase by 75 percent over 1960; diversification of the economy—sugar and its derivatives will make up about 60 percent of the value of the exports, and not 80 percent as now.

As regards construction: the elimination of 40 percent of the present housing shortage, including the *bohíos*, which are Cuban huts; the rational combination of construction materials to increase the use of local materials without sacrificing quality.

There is one point I would like to spend a minute on: that is education. We have laughed at the group of experts who would put education and sanitation as the condition *sine qua non* to begin the path of development. This seems to us to be an aberration, but that does not make it less true that

once the path of development is taken, education must proceed parallel with it. Without an adequate technological education, development is retarded. Therefore, Cuba has carried out a complete reform of education. It has expanded and improved educational services and has developed an overall educational plan.

At present Cuba occupies first place in Latin America in the allocation of resources to education: 5.3 percent of the national income. The developed nations devote 3 to 4 percent and Latin America from 1 to 2 percent of their national income to education. In Cuba, 28.3 percent of the current expenses of the state are for the Ministry of Education. Including other organizations that dedicate financial resources for education, that percentage increases to 30 percent. Among the Latin American countries, the next highest allocates 21 percent of its budget.

An increase in the budget to education, from $75 million in 1958 to $128 million in 1961, is an increase of 71 percent. The total expenses for education, including the literacy campaign and building schools, come to $170 million, 25 pesos per capita. In Denmark, for example, $25 per capita a year are spent on education; in France, $15; in Latin America, $5.

The creation, in two years, of 10,000 schoolrooms and the appointment of 10,000 new teachers. Cuba is the first country in Latin America that fully satisfies the needs of primary instruction for the entire student population, an aspiration of the principal project of UNESCO in Latin America for 1968, already achieved today in Cuba.

These really marvelous accomplishments and figures, absolutely true facts that we present here, distinguished delegates, have been made possible by the following measures: the nationalization of instruction, making it secular and free, and allowing complete utilization of its services; the creation of a system of scholarships, which guarantees meeting all the students' needs, in accordance with the following plan: 20,000 scholarships for basic secondary schools from seventh to ninth grade; 3,000 for the pre-university institutes; 3,000 for art instructors; 6,000 for universities; 1,500 for courses in artificial insemination; 1,200 for courses in agricultural machinery; 14,000 for courses in tailoring and sewing and home economics for peasant women; 1,200 for the training of rural school teachers; 750 for introductory courses in elementary education; 10,000 scholarships and study stipends for students of technological education; and, in addition,

hundreds of scholarships to study technology in the socialist countries; the creation of 100 centers of secondary education, with each municipality having at least one.

This year in Cuba, as I announced, illiteracy is being wiped out. It is a marvelous sight. Up to the present moment, 104,500 *brigadistas*, almost all of them students between 10 and 18 years old, have flooded the country from one end to the other, going directly to the peasant's *bohío*, to the workers' homes to convince the old person who does not want to study anymore, and thus to wipe out illiteracy in Cuba.

Each time a factory eliminates illiteracy among its workers, it raises a flag announcing this fact to the people of Cuba. Each time a cooperative wipes out illiteracy among its peasants, it hoists the same standard. And the 104,500 young students have as their symbol a book and a lantern, to bring the light of learning to the backward regions. They belong to the Conrado Benítez brigades, named in honor of the first martyr for education in the Cuban revolution, who was lynched by a group of counterrevolutionaries for the grave crime of teaching the peasants in the mountains of our country to read.

That is the difference, distinguished delegates, between our country and those who combat us. A total of 156,000 literacy volunteers, who are not full-time since they are workers or professionals, are working in education; 32,000 teachers are leading this army. And only with the active cooperation of the entire Cuban people are they able to achieve such significant statistics.

All this has been done in one year, or rather, in two years; seven regimental barracks have been converted into school-cities; 27 barracks into schools; and all this while facing the danger of imperialist aggression. The Camilo Cienfuegos School-City today has 5,000 pupils from the Sierra Maestra, and units are under construction for 20,000 pupils. The construction of a similar school-city in each province is projected. Each school-city will be self-sufficient in foodstuffs, introducing peasant children to agricultural techniques.

Moreover, new methods of teaching have been established. From 1958 to 1959, primary school enrollment increased from 602,000 to 1,231,700 pupils; basic secondary school, from 21,900 to 83,800; commercial schools, from 8,900 to 21,300; technical schools, from 5,600 to 11,500.

A total of $48 million has been invested in school construction in only two years. The National Printing Plant guarantees textbooks and other printed matter for all students, free of charge. There are two television networks that cover the whole national territory, and we use that powerful media for the massive dissemination of learning. Likewise, the entire national radio is at the disposal of the Ministry of Education. The Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry, the National Library and the National Theater, with departments throughout the country, complete the great apparatus for the dissemination of culture. The National Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation, whose initials are INDER, promotes physical development on a mass scale.

This, distinguished delegates, is the cultural panorama of Cuba at this time.

Now comes the final part of our presentation, the part of definitions, because we want to make our position completely clear.

We have denounced the Alliance for Progress as a vehicle designed to separate the people of Cuba from the other peoples of Latin America, to sterilize the example of the Cuban revolution, and then to subdue the other peoples according to imperialism's instructions. I would like to be allowed to fully demonstrate this.

There are many interesting documents in the world. We shall distribute among the delegates some documents that came into our hands and that demonstrate, for example, the opinion that imperialism has of the Venezuelan government, whose foreign minister harshly attacked us a few days ago, perhaps because he thought we were violating rules of friendship with his people or his government.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to point out that friendly hands brought us an interesting document. It is a report of a secret document addressed to Ambassador Moscoso in Venezuela by his advisers John M. Cates, Jr., Irving Tragen and Robert Cox.

In one of the paragraphs, speaking of the measures that must be taken in Venezuela to make a real Alliance for Progress directed by the United States, this document states: "Reform of the bureaucracy: All the plans that are formulated…"

They are speaking of Venezuela, and continue, "all the programs that are initiated for the economic development of Venezuela, whether they be

by the Venezuelan government or by US experts, will have to be put into practice through the Venezuelan bureaucracy. But as long as the public administration of this country is characterized by incompetence, indifference, inefficiency, formalism, factional favoritism in the granting of jobs, theft, duplication of functions and the creation of private empires, it will be practically impossible to put into effect dynamic and efficient projects through the governmental machinery. For that reason the reform of the administrative apparatus is possibly now the most fundamental necessity, which is not only directed to correcting basic economic and social injustice, but which also could imply reconditioning the very instrument by which all the other basic reforms and development projects will be molded."

There are many interesting things in this document that we will put at the disposal of the distinguished delegates, in which they speak, also, of the natives. After teaching the natives, they let the natives work. We are natives, nothing more. But there is something very interesting, distinguished delegates, and that is the recommendation that Mr. Cates makes to Mr. Moscoso about what must be done in Venezuela and why it must be done. He says as follows:

> The United States will be faced with the necessity, probably sooner than it is thought, of pointing out to the conservatives, the oligarchy, the newly rich, the national and foreign moneyed sectors in general, the military and the clergy, that they will, in the last analysis, have to choose between two things: to contribute to the establishment in Venezuela of a society based on the masses, in which they retain part of their status quo and wealth, or to be faced with the loss of both (and very possibly their own death at the hands of a firing squad)…

This is a report of the US advisers to their ambassador. It continues: "…if the forces of moderation and progress are routed in Venezuela."

After this, we are given the complete picture of the whole deception to be practiced in this conference, with other reports of the secret instructions given in Latin America by the US State Department in reference to the "Cuba case."

This is very important because it is what exposes the wolf in sheep's clothing. This is what it says. I am going to read an extract in deference to the brevity that I have already violated, but afterward we will circulate all of it:

> From the beginning, it was widely taken for granted in Latin America that the [Bay of Pigs] invasion was backed by the United States and, for that reason would be successful. The majority of the governments and responsible sections of the population were prepared to accept a fait accompli, although there were misgivings about the violation of the principle of nonintervention.
>
> The communists and other vehemently pro-Castro elements immediately took the offensive with demonstrations and acts of violence directed against US agencies in various countries, especially in Argentina, Bolivia and Mexico. Nevertheless, such anti-US and pro-Castro activities received limited backing and had less effect than might have been expected.
>
> The failure of the invasion discouraged the anti-Castro sectors, who thought that the United States should have done something dramatic that would restore its damaged prestige, but it was received with joy by the communists and other pro-Castro elements.

It continues:

> In most cases, the reactions of the Latin American governments were not surprising. With the exception of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the republics that had already broken or suspended their relations with Cuba expressed their understanding of the US position. Honduras joined the anti-Castro camp, suspending its relations in April and proposing the formation of an alliance of Central American and Caribbean nations to deal with Cuba through force. The proposal, which was also suggested independently by Nicaragua, was quietly abandoned when Venezuela refused to back it.
>
> Venezuela, Colombia, and Panama expressed a serious concern about Soviet and international communist penetration in Cuba, but

> they remained in favor of carrying out some type of collective action by the OAS to deal with the Cuban problem.

“Collective action by the OAS”—here we enter familiar territory.

> A similar opinion was adopted by Argentina, Uruguay and Costa Rica. Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil and Mexico refused to back any position that might imply an intervention in the internal affairs of Cuba. This attitude was probably very strong in Chile, where the government met strong opposition in all spheres to an open military intervention by any state against the Castro regime. In Brazil and Ecuador the question provoked serious divisions in the cabinet, in the congress, and in the political parties.
>
> In the case of Ecuador, the intransigently pro-Cuba position of President Velasco was shaken but not altered by the discovery that Ecuadoran communists were being trained inside the country in guerrilla tactics by pro-Castro revolutionaries.

Parenthetically, I will state that this is a lie.

> Likewise, there is little doubt that some of the formerly uncommitted elements in Latin America have been favorably impressed by Castro’s ability to survive a military attack supported by the United States against his regime. Many who had hesitated to commit themselves before, because they believed that the United States would eliminate the Castro regime in the course of time, may have changed their opinion now. The victory of Castro has demonstrated to them the permanent and viable character of the Cuban revolution.

This is the report by the United States.

> Moreover, his victory has undoubtedly aroused the latent anti-US attitude that prevails in a great part of Latin America.
>
> In all respects, the member states of the OAS are now less hostile to US intervention in Cuba than before the invasion, but a majority—including Brazil and Mexico, who together account for more than half

the population of Latin America—are not ready to actively intervene or even to join in a quarantine against Cuba. Nor could it be expected that the OAS would give beforehand its approval of direct intervention by the United States, except in the event that Castro might be involved, beyond any doubt, in an attack on a Latin American government.

Even when the United States might be successful… *[which looks improbable]* …in persuading the majority of Latin American states to join in a quarantine of Cuba, it would not be totally successful. Certainly Mexico and Brazil would refuse to cooperate and would serve as a channel for travel and other communication between Latin America and Cuba.

Mexico's longstanding opposition to intervention of any kind would not represent an insuperable obstacle to collective action by the OAS against Cuba. The attitude of Brazil, however, which exercises a strong influence over its South American neighbors, is decisive for hemispheric cooperation. As long as Brazil refuses to act against Castro, it is probable that a number of other nations, including Argentina and Chile, would not want to risk adverse internal repercussions to accommodate the United States.

The magnitude of the threat that Castro and the communists constitute in other parts of Latin America will probably continue to depend, fundamentally, on the following factors: (a) the ability of the regime to maintain its position; (b) its efficacy in demonstrating the success of its mode of coping with the problems of reform and development; and (c) the ability of the noncommunist elements in other Latin American countries to provide feasible and popularly acceptable alternatives.

If, by means of propaganda, etc., Castro can convince the disaffected elements of Latin America that basic social reforms are really being made…

That is to say, if the distinguished delegates are convinced that what we are saying is true.

…that benefit the poorest classes, the attraction of the Cuban example will increase and will continue to inspire imitators on the left in the

> whole region. The danger is not so much that a subversive apparatus, with its center in Havana, could export revolution, as that growing extreme poverty and discontent among the masses of the Latin American people may provide the pro-Castro elements opportunities to act.

After considering whether or not we are intervening, they argue:

> It is probable that the Cubans will act cautiously in this respect for some time. Probably they do not wish to risk the interception or discovery of any military adventure or military supply operation originating in Cuba. Such an eventuality would lead to a hardening of official Latin American opinion against Cuba, possibly to the point of providing tacit support to US intervention, or at least giving possible motives for sanctions on the part of the OAS. For these reasons and owing to Castro's concern with the defense of his own territory at this time, the use of Cuban military forces to support insurrection in other places is extremely improbable.

So, distinguished delegates who might have doubts, the government of the United States is announcing that it is very difficult for our troops to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

> As time goes on, and with the absence of direct Cuban intervention in the internal affairs of neighboring states, the present fears of Castroism, of Soviet intervention in the regime, of its "socialist" nature… *[They put it in quotation* marks.] …and of repugnancy for the repression of Castro's police state, will tend to decrease and the traditional policy of nonintervention will reassert itself.

It says further on: "Apart from its direct effect on the prestige of the United States in that area…" Its prestige has undoubtedly decreased as a result of the failure of the invasion. It continues:

> …the survival of the Castro regime could have a profound effect on Latin American political life in coming years. Likewise, it prepares the

> scene for a political struggle in the terms promoted by communist propaganda for a long time in this hemisphere, with the anti-United States, “popular”…

In quotation marks.

> …forces on one side, and the ruling groups allied to the United States on the other. The governments that promise an evolutionary reform over a period of years, even at an accelerated pace, will be confronted by political leaders who promise an immediate remedy for the social ills by means of the confiscation of property and the overturning of the society. The most immediate danger of Castro’s army for Latin America could very well be the danger to the stability of those governments that are presently attempting evolutionary social and economic changes, rather than to those that have tried to prevent such changes, in part due to the tensions and heightened expectations that accompany social changes and economic development. The urban unemployed and the landless peasants of Venezuela and Peru, for example, who have hoped that Acción Democrática and the APRA would implement reforms, constitute a quick source of political strength for the politician who convinces them that change can be implemented much more rapidly than the social democratic movements have promised. The popular support that the groups seeking evolutionary changes presently enjoy or the potential backing that they normally could obtain as the Latin American masses become more active politically would be lost to the degree that the extremist political leaders, utilizing the example of Castro, can rally support for revolutionary change.

And in the last paragraph, gentlemen, appears our friend who is present here:

> The Alliance for Progress could very well provide the stimulus to carry out more intensive reform programs. But unless these are initiated rapidly and begin to show positive results soon, it is probable that they will not be sufficient to counterbalance the growing pressure of the

> extreme left. The years ahead will witness, almost surely, a race between those who are attempting to initiate evolutionary reform programs and those who are trying to generate mass support for fundamental economic and social revolution. If the moderates are left behind in this race they could, in time, see themselves deprived of their mass support and caught in an untenable position between the extremes of right and left.

These are, distinguished delegates, the documents the Cuban delegation wanted to place before you, in order to analyze frankly the Alliance for Progress. Now we all know the private judgment of the US State Department: the economies of the Latin American countries have to grow because if they do not a phenomenon called Castroism will come to the fore, which will be dreadful for the United States.

Well then, gentlemen, let us make the Alliance for Progress on those terms: let the economies of all the member countries of the OAS really grow. Let them grow so that they consume their own products and not so that they are turned into a source of income for the US monopolies. Let them grow to assure social peace, not to create new reserves for an eventual war of conquest. Let them grow for us, not for those abroad.

And to all of you, distinguished delegates, the Cuban delegation says with all frankness: we wish, on our conditions, to be within the Latin American family. We want to live with Latin America. We want to see you grow, if possible, at the same rate that we are growing, but we do not oppose your growing at another rate. What we do demand is the guarantee of nonaggression for our borders.

We cannot stop exporting our example, as the United States wants, because an example is something intangible that crosses borders. What we do guarantee is that we will not export revolution. We guarantee that not one rifle will be moved from Cuba, that not one weapon will be moved from Cuba for fighting in any other country in Latin America.

What we cannot guarantee is that the idea of Cuba will not take root in some other country of Latin America, and what we do guarantee this conference is that if urgent measures of social prevention are not taken, the example of Cuba will take root in the people. And then that statement that once gave people a lot to think about, which Fidel made one July 26 and

which was interpreted as an aggression, will again be true. Fidel said that if the social conditions continued as they have been until now, “the Andes would become the Sierra Maestra of Latin America.”

Distinguished delegates, we call for an Alliance for Progress, an alliance for our progress, a peaceful alliance for the progress of all. We are not opposed to being left out in the distribution of loans, but we are opposed to being left out in participating in the cultural and spiritual life of our Latin American people, to whom we belong.

What we will never allow is a restriction on our freedom to trade and have relations with all the peoples of the world. And we will defend ourselves with all our strength against any attempt at foreign aggression, be it from an imperial power or be it from some Latin American body that concurs in the desire of some to see us wiped out.

To conclude, Mr. President, distinguished delegates, I want to tell you that some time ago we had a meeting of the general staff of the Revolutionary Armed Forces in my country, a general staff to which I belong. An aggression against Cuba was being discussed, which we knew would come, but we did not know when or where. We thought it would be very big; in fact, it was going to be very big. This happened prior to the famous warning of the prime minister of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, who said that their rockets could fly beyond the Soviet borders. We had not asked for that aid and we did not know about their readiness to aid us. Therefore, we met knowing that the invasion was coming, in order to face our final destiny as revolutionaries.

We knew that if the United States invaded Cuba, there would be a massive slaughter, but that in the end we would be defeated and expelled from every inhabited place in the country. We members of the general staff then proposed that Fidel Castro retire to a secure place in the mountains and that one of us take charge of the defense of Havana. Our prime minister and leader answered at that time with words that exalt him—as do all his actions—that if the United States invaded Cuba and Havana was defended as it should be defended, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children would be slaughtered by Yankee weapons, and the leader of a people in revolution could not be asked to take shelter in the mountains; that his place was there, where the cherished dead were to be found, and that there, with them, he would fulfill his historic mission.

That invasion did not take place, but we maintain that spirit, distinguished delegates. For that reason I can predict that the Cuban revolution is invincible, because it has a people and because it has a leader like the one leading Cuba.

That is all, distinguished delegates.

“The Real Road to Development”

Punta del Este, August 16, 1961

This is Che Guevara’s second intervention, as the representative of the Cuban revolutionary government, at the Seventh Plenary Session of the Special Meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES), sponsored by the OAS in Punta del Este on August 16, 1961.

Mr. President and fellow delegates:

Cuba is forced to abstain in the general vote on the document. I would like to give some details to explain why it is doing so.

Mr. President, in the speech that this delegation gave during the inaugural session, we warned of the dangers that the Alliance for Progress meeting entailed, believing that it was the beginning of a maneuver aimed at isolating the Cuban revolution.

Even so, the Cuban delegation explained that it was willing to work harmoniously, to discuss matters in line with the guiding principles of our revolution and to try to coordinate joint action with all countries in order to achieve documents that would express not only our peoples’ reality but also their aspirations.

Unfortunately, the Cuban delegation understands that it has not been possible to fulfill those aspirations in full. Mr. President, Cuba brought 29 draft resolutions on many of the main problems that, in our view, afflict Latin America, distort its development and force it to do what the foreign monopolies want.

Cuba pointed out the contradiction between the insignificance of the goals and the magnificence of the proclamations. The participants talked of a challenge to the future; they talked of an alliance that was going to

provide Latin America with well-being, and many grandiloquent words were employed.

However, when it comes to saying precisely which decade will be the one of democratic progress, we find that, at a net annual per capita growth rate of 2.5 percent, it will take around 100 years to reach the present level of the United States—which, clearly, has a high standard of living—but it is not an unattainable goal that should be considered absurd for the countries of Latin America and the rest of the world.

Moreover, calculating—naturally, this is a calculation that does not have a scientific basis and serves only as a means of expressing ideas—that the development process of the countries that are presently underdeveloped and that of the industrialized countries remains the same, it would take the underdeveloped countries 500 years to achieve the same per capita income as in the developed countries. We understand that, when the situation in Latin America is like this—and there is a reason for our having held this economic conference—we cannot talk about such grand purposes while setting such small goals for ourselves.

In education and health, the goals have also been very modest—in some cases more modest than the proposals that international organizations, such as UNESCO, set several years ago. Our country has more than met some of these goals, and it will more than meet all of them with in the next five years.

No goals were defined in housing, and we did not even come up with a qualitative definition of what the region’s industrial development will be.

Moreover, we have noted some lack of precision in setting goals in agriculture, where large and small landholdings are treated the same way and where the activities of the foreigners who have large landholdings—which distort the economies of many Latin American countries—are not even considered.

Cuba felt that if many of these goals, which had already been stated, were left in more or less the same form as in the original documents that were submitted to us for our consideration and, if the system of direct private investments from abroad was maintained, it would be impossible to attain the fundamentals required for really establishing the right of the Latin American peoples to begin to lay the foundations of the healthy economies required for achieving high growth rates.

In addition, during the conference, the Cuban delegation repeatedly asked what mechanism would be used for distributing the resources of the so-called Alliance for Progress and if Cuba would have access to those resources. These two questions have not been answered.

With regard to Latin American economic integration, Cuba pointed out that integration was not a panacea and could not serve as an alternative to basic socioeconomic reforms, and it asked if countries with different forms of economic and social organization would be included in that integration, since Cuba was willing to support Latin American integration if its specific socioeconomic characteristics were respected.

Moreover, Cuba pointed out that full territorial sovereignty was a prerequisite for solid integration and referred specifically to the Guantánamo Naval Base that exists in Cuban territory, as well as to the Panama Canal. In addition, some further requests were made—requests that were sometimes whittled down considerably from their original form—which were incorporated in one way or another in the meeting's final documents. But others, such as the demand for guarantees for the ships and planes of all the member countries, were not even taken up.

With regard to raw materials and commodities, we pointed to the instability of prices and markets; denounced economic aggression and asked that it be condemned and proscribed; pointed to the need for the Latin American countries to diversify their exports, increasing the processing of raw materials and commodities, incorporating new products in their exports and opening new markets; and specifically pointed to the market of the socialist world, which now has a global growth rate of 10 percent.

Cuba criticized subsidies and the dumping of raw materials and commodities by the industrialized countries and pointed to the risks that the accumulation of agricultural surpluses or strategic mineral reserves may bring to the raw materials and commodities markets. Cuba's proposals and warnings were echoed by some countries, and it echoed those of other countries in some cases because, naturally, many of these problems are common to our underdeveloped countries.

However, the final document has reduced the real intentions of the promoters of these ideas to practically nothing, just pulling teeth. For example, while the Cuban delegation urged that restrictions on imports and subsidies for the domestic production of raw materials and commodities by

the industrialized countries be abolished, the final document spoke only of reducing those restrictions until they were abolished, “if possible.”

The same thing happened with many other specific proposals, all of them ending up as vague declarations including the phrases “if possible,” “within the regulations,” “conditions permitting,” “if so required” and “if permitted.” Thus, the escape clauses have already been established.

According to the [UN] Food and Agriculture Organization, the United States spent—this is what is stated in the data I have—US$2.525 billion to support agricultural prices in 1955. This is much more than the amount it has given in any one year to the countries in the Alliance for Progress.

This document does not even offer an effective guarantee that subsidized production in the United States will not continue to expand.

Cuba participated constructively in many proposals, trying to achieve effective resolutions that, without infringing on the sovereignty of any member country—not even the sovereignty of that powerful country which, because of its industrial development, is in a different situation from others—could lead to an understanding that would give the smaller and underdeveloped countries in general full guarantees that they could initiate that new era so many people are talking about.

Yesterday, the declaration that we worked on, and on which Cuba abstained because it contains several debatable points—some of them basic and others a matter of wording, as had happened throughout the meeting—was presented.

The main point is that, once again, the United States did not reply to Cuba’s question, so its silence should be interpreted as a negative, and Cuba will not take part in the Alliance for Progress. You cannot support an alliance in which one of the allies will not have any participation. In addition, the declaration does not attack the main root of our ills—the existence of foreign monopolies that distort our economies and even tie our international policies to dictates from abroad.

It does not denounce economic aggression, and Cuba, which knows from its own experience just how harmful such aggression is, feels that it is very important to denounce that aggression.

The declaration insists on solving Latin America’s problems by means of monetary policy, assuming that monetary changes will change the countries’ economic structures. We have stated over and over again that a

complete structural change in the relations of production is required in order to create the conditions that must exist if the peoples are to make any progress.

It also remains within a free enterprise framework, which Cuba has publicly condemned in philosophical terms, together with the exploitation of human beings by others. In practice, free enterprise, which has nothing to do with the new development processes, has been nearly eliminated in our territory.

Fellow delegates, these are the reasons why Cuba cannot sign this document.

However, I would like to say that some constructive work has been done and that Cuba has not felt isolated during this conference. Many meetings were held to which Cuba was not invited—and, naturally, we cannot express an opinion on the content of the discussions that took place. But we do know that the main topic in many of them was Cuba, and we also know that there were good friends, people holding strong convictions and positions, who maintained an attitude favorable to Cuba.

So, we have reached the final session of this conference in harmony, and we believe that we have shown that, at all times, we sought to cooperate in expanding the inter-American system on the basis of real independence and friendship with the peoples—not on the basis of making all of us dependent, under the orders of one.

Cuba has been satisfied with the proceedings here, insofar as we think new perspectives are opening for Latin America, even though our delegation could not sign the document.

One of the paragraphs explicitly admits the existence of systems that are different from those based on the philosophy of free enterprise; therefore, it admits that this meeting includes a country that has some specific characteristics that differentiate it from the others but that still allow it to be part of the whole, since it is explicitly defined in one of the “whereases.”

Therefore, we think that the first link of true peaceful coexistence in the Americas has been established and that the first step has been taken for those governments that are resolutely opposed to our government and to our system at least to acknowledge the irreversibility of the Cuban revolution and its right to be recognized as an independent government, with all of its

specific characteristics—even though they do not like its system of government.

The US government has voted for all the parts of this document, and we understand that it has also taken a positive step, establishing that regimes may exist whose philosophy adversely affects that of free enterprise in this part of the Americas. We think this is a very positive step.

We have always been willing to settle our differences with the US government—differences that have given rise to a lot of discussion and to some meetings in this part of the world—and we have always said that we can meet anywhere, as long as there are no strings attached.

Once more, our government expressly states this willingness. It also states that it is not begging for any kind of rapprochement or asking for a truce; rather, it is simply stating its position and letting all the friendly countries know clearly that Cuba wants to live in peace with all the peoples of the Americas that want to do the same.

However, we believe that there is still a danger. We would fail to uphold the Cuban revolution's tradition of being totally forthright if we did not say that we know that all those meetings were somehow linked to a meeting of foreign ministers in which the case of Cuba was discussed. We understand that a lot of traveling has been done in this regard, seeking affirmative votes for the meeting.

Nevertheless, something constructive has been achieved. Years ago, the foreign ministers met to denounce Guatemala, and then an economic conference was promised. More or less the same thing happened with Costa Rica. Now, an economic conference is being held, and the foreign ministers will later meet.

We think that this is a great step forward, and we hope that the foreign ministers' meeting will not be held; if it is not, that would constitute an even bigger step forward. But now the main dilemma of this era has been posed; this is a crucial moment for the peoples of the world, one whose importance is also reflected in the Americas.

Several delegates—maybe all of you—have wondered, "What will happen if the Alliance for Progress fails?" This is a very important question. The United States has felt the pressure exerted by the peoples. It has seen that the situation in Latin America, as in the rest of the world, is one of

extreme tension; that it threatens the very foundations of the imperialist regime; and that we must seek a solution.

This Alliance for Progress is an attempt to seek a solution within the framework of economic imperialism. We believe that, in these conditions, the Alliance for Progress will be a failure. First of all, without any desire to offend, I doubt that it will have US$20 billion to work with in the next few years. The administrative restrictions of the great country to the north are such that it sometimes threatens—as I think it is doing today—to attach strings to foreign loans of as little as US$5 million. If that threat exists for such small amounts, you can imagine the threats there will be for amounts as large as the one already mentioned.

Moreover, it has been stated explicitly that those loans will be used mainly to promote free enterprise. And, since the imperialist monopolies that have been consolidated in almost all Latin American countries have not been denounced in any way, it is logical to suppose that the loans that are agreed to will be used to develop those monopolies. Unquestionably, this will bring about an upsurge in industry and business and result in profits for the companies. In the free trade system in effect in nearly all of Latin America, this would mean greater exports of capital to the United States—so, in short, the Alliance for Progress would become a means for Latin American countries to finance foreign monopolies.

Moreover, since the document contains no explicit decision on basic points, such as the maintenance of the prices of raw materials, an obligation to maintain those prices or a prohibition on lowering them, it is very probable that, in the coming years, the present trend will continue, and the prices of Latin America’s raw materials will keep falling.

In that case, it is probable there will be an ever worsening deterioration in the balance of payments of each of the Latin American countries, to which will be added the effects of the export of capital by the monopolies. All this will translate into a lack of development—the opposite of what the Alliance for Progress is supposed to achieve. The lack of development will bring about more unemployment; unemployment will mean a real drop in wages; and an inflationary process—with which we are all familiar—will begin, in order to meet the shortages in the national budgets that are caused by lack of income. At that point, the International Monetary Fund will

begin to play a preponderant role in nearly all the countries of Latin America.

That is when the crucial choice for the Latin American countries will arise. There are only two possible paths: to confront the people's discontent, with all that that entails, or to take the path of the liberation of foreign trade, which is of fundamental importance for our economies; to develop an independent economic policy; and to promote the development of all the domestic forces in the country—all this, naturally, within the framework of independent foreign policies that will lead to developing trade with countries in other parts of the world.

Naturally, not all countries will be able to do this, because it requires some special conditions. First of all, you need a lot of courage. Within the present system, the rulers will have to effect a great change in their economic and foreign policies and will immediately come into conflict with the foreign monopolies. The masses will support the governments that enter into conflict to defend their citizens' standard of living, but, when the masses defend a position, they also make demands. So the governments will be faced with a double threat, which they will not always manage to deal with successfully: pressure by the imperialist monopolies on the one hand and pressure by the masses, who will be demanding more, on the other. To really take such a road, you must break down former structures, place yourself on the side of the masses and initiate a thorough revolution. But we are not talking about revolution; we are talking about the path that the governments may follow without its leading to the outbreak of revolutionary processes.

Faced with this choice, if the rulers have the courage to confront the situation, if they satisfy a considerable part of the aspirations of the masses and if they do not back down under pressure from the foreign monopolies, they will be able to make progress for some time.

Unfortunately, what history shows us is that, when faced with this choice, the rulers, fearing pressure from the masses, ally themselves with the monopolies and the importing sector of the national bourgeoisie and initiate a stage of repression.

If an independent policy is to succeed, the government must have not only a strong, aggressive national bourgeoisie that wants improvement and is aware of its ideals but also an army that understands the present situation

in Latin America and the rest of the world. We cannot predict whether or not this will happen.

The other path is that of the people's discontent. In these conditions, their discontent increases to the point that, once again, two historic alternatives arise and a choice has to be made: either the governments are replaced through elections and new governments are installed, this time with the masses' direct participation in power, or a state of civil war is established. If a government with participation by the masses comes to power, great contradictions will again arise between the masses, who will be trying to have their demands met, and the national armies, which defend different social strata and will still have the weapons. This is fertile ground for another civil war.

If the governments manage to eliminate the mass movement and maintain an iron grip on the government apparatus, the threat of civil war—for which Cuba states here and now it will not be responsible—will always hang over their heads. Those civil wars, which will begin in very difficult conditions, in the harshest terrain, will gradually spread to the countryside, laying siege to the cities, and one day the masses will seize political power.

Mr. President and fellow delegates, this is the message Cuba feels bound to convey to all of you: what it thinks about the Alliance for Progress, the dangers in the Alliance for Progress, and what it foresees in the future of the peoples, if—as has been the case so far—all international meetings turn into mere oratorical contests.

Therefore, while expressing its affinity with many of the aspirations set forth in this Punta del Este accord, Cuba regrets that it cannot sign it now; Cuba reiterates its desire for friendship with the peoples of the continent. It is willing to discuss any bilateral problem that may arise with other Latin American countries, and expresses its gratitude for the spirit of cooperation with which all delegates have listened to the comments by the Cuban delegation—its address, its warnings and its perhaps too-often-repeated and exhaustive explanations.

Thank you.

Cuban Television interview about the Alliance for Progress and the CIES Conference in Punta del Este

The following is the transcript of the televised press conference held in Cuba on August 23, 1961, where Che Guevara reported on the recent Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES) in Punta del Este.

Moderator: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. As you have heard, Dr. Ernesto Guevara, minister of the economy of the revolutionary government, is here with us tonight to report to the people of Cuba about the Punta del Este conference. The way he represented Cuba in that conference, in which insidious attempts were made to organize the other Latin American countries against Cuba, won him the respect of everyone—including our adversaries—and, naturally, the gratitude of all Cubans.

As you know, Dr. Guevara visited Buenos Aires at the conclusion of the Punta del Este conference and met with President Frondizi. After that, he went to Brasilia, where President Quadros presented him with the Order of the Southern Cross, Brazil's highest decoration. All this has increased the interest in his appearance tonight.

Dr. Guevara will begin by addressing you, after which, as usual, journalists may ask questions.

Che Guevara: Before answering the compañero journalists' questions, I will summarize—as briefly as possible—the results of the conference, its initial goals and the role that Cuba and the other countries played in it.

I will begin by explaining what the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES) conference was. The CIES is a part of the Organization of American States (OAS) that concerns itself with economic matters in the Americas. Traditionally, it has been dominated by US imperialist interests, and has been completely under that influence up to now.

The Conference of Economic Ministers—and this is the source of the small mistake that [moderator] compañero [Luis Gómez] Wangüemert made, because I am not minister of the economy, though the conference was one of economic ministers—was held in order to establish an "Alliance for

Progress," as Kennedy announced, and, naturally, to chain the Latin American countries more tightly to the financial organizations of Wall Street, to isolate Cuba and, if possible, to organize another armed attack on Cuba.

We had some very important—and rather different—tasks: to work with our sister Latin American republics, to try to get the conference to adopt positions that were more in line with the peoples' interests, to unmask imperialism, and to counter its attempts to isolate us by isolating it instead. These were ambitious goals, and it was not possible to achieve them in full, but we did manage to bring out some aspects that were important to the Latin American governments and peoples.

First of all, the falsehood of the Alliance for Progress was proved to the governments represented at the conference, along with the imperialist motives that lie behind it, in all the work, in all the little committees that were formed outside the conference. The North Americans' attempts to isolate us were exposed, and it was also made clear that the peoples and governments could not make progress along the path of humiliation and subjugation to the interests of Wall Street. Presumably, the countries that have shown a more independent attitude are those that have benefited the most from this Alliance for Progress, although, naturally, it is impossible to know what the exact results of the Alliance for Progress are as yet, for it is based on a framework of suppositions and lies that, in the best of cases, should still be judged by reality, and it is very probable that reality will show that it is a great confidence trick mounted against the Latin American peoples.

Right from the beginning of the conference, we described it as a political meeting and exposed the attempts being made to isolate Cuba. We strongly opposed the fifth point that was discussed in the fourth commission of the conference, related to promoting the Alliance for Progress plan. It was a plan for taming Latin American public opinion and placing it at the service of the United States. As soon as nearly all the large Latin American countries, headed by Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, opposed that point—and many other, smaller nations, too—it was eliminated. Cuba led the discussion on this subject, and with good reason, as it was expressly named in the preliminary report—the document that was later called the

preliminary report—which described Cuba as “a dictatorship that had eliminated all organs of the press.”

The worst thing was not this political characterization of Cuba, but the fact that a supposed inter-American organization, in which all countries have the same rights, was allowing itself to judge and denounce Cuba’s position, through the officials of that organization, who were also the owners of reactionary Latin American newspapers. Thus, we were automatically denounced by an intercontinental organization, judged by a group of so-called experts, but without any trial by the Latin American nations.

Right from the start, the criticism of Cuba centered on that fifth point, which, as I have said, was eliminated, and it was replaced with a version which, though still poisonous, was much harder to pin down.

Naturally, different countries had very different positions. At the beginning, some formal mistakes were made that forced Cuba to protest. Minister of the Economy Beltrán Espantoso, the delegate from Peru, was named to represent all the visiting delegations in thanking President Haedo. It was a ceremonial role, and it should have been nothing more than a courteous address; but the Peruvian minister expressed a political opinion of the Alliance for Progress, placing it directly within the “Christian, Western civilization” of “representative democracy,” with “free elections,” etc. So Cuba had to protest. It was a double protest: first, because, in a ceremonial address, when you are representing all the countries, you should not express political opinions, which must be discussed; and, second, because Cuba had not been consulted on this and, without its agreement, the delegate from a country that did not have diplomatic relations with us had been named to represent all the countries.

At first, the situation was volatile, but the delegate from Ecuador immediately supported us, because he had not been consulted, either. Thus, some issues like this were brought out.

In the plenary session, before the various delegations took the floor, we expressed our thanks to the people and government of Uruguay and said that we were doing this independently because we did not agree with the statements that Mr. Beltrán had made earlier.

Several different positions were defined right from the start. Cuba’s position, naturally, placed it at one extreme of the intercontinental struggle

that was waged in Punta del Este. The United States was at the other extreme, and there was a very wide range in between that can be reduced to two or three main positions.

Most of the small Caribbean countries—and some South American countries, as well—took a servile position on the side of the United States, voting for all the measures that the United States proposed or that it proposed through other countries (usually Guatemala or Peru, though at times it also used others). The use of proxies is a common US tactic.

Some countries fought for specific economic measures, supposing that this was not a political conference; in other words, they did not take part in the political debates of the conference. These countries included Argentina and, to some extent, Mexico.

Other countries clearly recognized the importance of the need for Latin American unity, saw the danger of Cuba's isolation, and understood the basis of this Alliance for Progress. Their champion was Brazil, whose decisive action kept the conference from adopting other kinds of resolutions that could have been detrimental to the Cuban delegation. The specific instructions of President Quadros meant that, at all times, the United States had to restrain itself concerning Cuba, in order to avoid Brazil's voting against them.

Naturally, all of these are suppositions, because the discussions on the important issues at the conference did not take place publicly, but were held between delegations, and the Cuban delegation never took part in them. We found out later through friends, journalists or members of an enemy country's delegation who were personal friends and passed on the information. In other words, we found ourselves in the midst of a "cold war," and methods appropriate to a war were employed.

In addition, some countries—mainly Bolivia and Ecuador—took outstanding positions in the defense of democratic principles and the people's self-determination. They joined Cuba many times and showed the real importance that their governments gave to the conference. Because of them, Cuba never felt alone.

Bolivia's attitude was especially admirable and courageous in the conference—so much so that the members of cliques called its delegates "the Cubans' first cousins," a nickname that was very dangerous for a

country in Bolivia's particular situation. The Bolivians' position on many points in the discussion was very outspoken.

The 10 or 12 days of discussions were very intense; we had to be constantly on guard in one commission or another—there were four commissions in total—and we had to fight against the attempts that were made to inject poison in the declarations, articles and foundations of declarations in order to place Cuba in a difficult position.

In the general assembly, the Cuban delegation acted with great firmness; all of my compañeros did a tremendous job. We can say that the Cuban delegation was a model of discipline and that none of its members did anything in Punta del Este but work in the commissions in circumstances in which, as always happens in this kind of conference, some of the representatives of other countries hardly ever showed up but rather spent their time in the casinos and other such places of amusement, which were plentiful.

Naturally, with all the responsibilities it bears right now, Cuba could not allow itself to engage in that kind of thing, and its continuous work in all the commissions gradually modified even the approach of some countries that are out-and-out enemies of ours.

Cuba raised its voice, expressing its opinion, in all the commissions. Cuba's opinions were defeated in the votes, but many delegates who voted against them did so unwillingly.

When a foreign delegate greeted us publicly, it was a significant expression of independence and daring, because they then became the focus of all the other delegates' gaze, the cameras of the many representatives of the international press and the attention of the intelligence services—especially those of the United States.

Even so, there were many surprises. Many people approached us individually, saying that, in general, a new stage in the Americas had been initiated at Punta del Este. This new stage was created by the peoples'—or, rather, the governments'—sense of independence. Most of the peoples were not represented at Punta del Este—only the Cuban people and a few others. In general, the governments represented the oligarchies of each country, each one faced with serious problems, which made them realize it would be difficult to survive in the coming years. It is not a long-term problem anymore, it is a problem of how to get through the coming months or the

coming year, how to manage to hang on until the end of your term in office, how to manage to stay in power without causing upsets, without having to confront serious problems.

They had seen how Cuba's stance, two and a half years after we had liberated ourselves, had increasingly become a head-on confrontation with the United States, but they also saw that no catastrophe had occurred and that Cuba's development was very accelerated—which did not interest most of the countries very much, but they were interested in the fact that there were great possibilities for surviving, even against the will of the United States. This interested them because they used Cuba as a kind of blackmail. Sitting near us was a delegate of one of the dictatorial countries that has broken off relations with us—personally, he is a very nice man—and he admitted cynically that he was "in the beneficial shadow of Che, trying to see what I can get." Naturally, the "shadow of Che" was not the shadow of Che at all; it was the shadow of the Cuban revolution, which, with its steadfast attitude and complete denunciation all the North Americans' plans, enabled other countries to reap small benefits, and many of them did try to get something. For the first time in a Latin American conference, divergent voices were raised, which forced the United States to change its strategy—a strategy it had been preparing for some time, with trips by the foreign ministers of other countries, statements by top-ranking US authorities aimed at creating a climate for holding a foreign ministers' conference to first call on Cuba to rejoin the Latin American countries, and abandon its "nefarious alliance" and then to denounce and isolate it.

The Punta del Este conference was a kind of advance payment made to the governments for their complicity in this. Even so, our attitude of resolute denunciation—as well as the support of Brazil, a country of enormous importance, and several other Latin American countries, categorically opposing the linking of this conference with any other one—seem to have put paid to US plans right now. I say "seem to have" because there is no way of knowing for sure what will happen. The United States is a very powerful country; it has a lot of levers for manipulating the oligarchies of the countries it controls, and it will keep on working in that regard. Nevertheless, we think that it will be very difficult for it to call a foreign ministers' conference right now.

It is hardly necessary to say that, if it does call such a conference and if it denounces us, it will not be anything more than a formal denunciation that the people will not support and that will be totally against themselves, and it will bring the countries that participate in it nothing but trouble. In any case, it will be very difficult to hold such a conference. Some of the very large countries, such as Brazil, have assured us that they will not participate in it; the president of Argentina adopted a similar stand yesterday; and Mexico's position on this is well known, so the most important Latin American countries are absolutely opposed to bringing any kind of political pressure to bear against Cuba.

The final result of the conference was a voluminous legacy setting forth the Latin American peoples' aspirations for the coming 10 years, in the decade of "accelerated, fruitful, democratic progress." It has a preamble, called the Declaration to the Peoples of the Americas, which tries to sum up the proceedings; it is a verbose summary, full of adjectives and no figures, but says nothing and makes nothing obligatory.

From the political point of view, the conference may be considered a resounding failure for US aspirations to denounce Cuba. From the viewpoint of its special economic policy, I doubt that it was such a great failure, because the United States has made the peoples—in other words, the governments, and, through the Latin American governments, the peoples—believe that it is really willing to help them, when this is not the case at all. Even if it were willing to help, it cannot do so; and, even if it could, it would have to help the ruling circles allied to the monopoly interests in each country, not the ruling circles alone, so the investments would turn into new business for the monopolies or for the oligarchies themselves that want to deposit their money in the United States.

In other words, the wheel would come full circle—just as it used to do in Cuba, before liberation, when local groups joined forces with US interests, had common businesses favored by the government, made money, turned their money into dollars and deposited those dollars in the United States.

Naturally, that system in no way benefited the peoples. But the main statement, the main part of that long document called the Punta del Este accord is really the part in which the United States sets the amounts it would give to Latin America. The paragraph where those amounts are set

forth does not commit the United States, because it is drawn up so vaguely that, really, the United States can refer to this document to show that it has no basic obligations:

> The United States declares that, if the peoples of Latin America adjust their economic policies, the United States and other western powers, such as West Germany and Japan, might consider investing no less than US$20 billion over the course of the next decade.

In other words, it is filled with dubious phrases and, unquestionably, the United States does not pledge to do anything more than take some steps, look on with sympathy, and consider the possibilities. The only effective obligation of the United States is to give a billion dollars during this first year, but a billion dollars in such a way that half a billion has already been appropriated: that was the first half billion dollars that Congress had authorized; as for the other half million, we will have to see. Moreover, there was a requirement that complete projects would have to be submitted within 60 days of the signing of the Punta del Este accord.

It is impossible to present a project, or even a draft, in 60 days, so the only thing it will finance will be what has already been done, what has already been discussed. Some projects will be carried out in the northeastern part of Brazil with financing that has already been granted by the US government; presumably, there will be something in Argentina, too; there has been talk of building a hydroelectric power station in the Chocón region and irrigating the land. But the small countries will not be able to implement any kind of project, and they will see very little—if any—of those first billion dollars.

About that first $1 billion, half a billion is apparently real, and the other half billion is more a subject for discussion than anything else. As for the other $19 billion— that constitutes the nub of the confidence trick.

Therefore, in spite of everything, I feel the United States is still to impose a scheme of this kind, in spite of the new influences that have arisen, the new pressures from the peoples. In reality, it is scandalous how the peoples are being swindled.

The US Senate and House of Representatives have the power to grant or withhold those loans. Therefore, Representative Dillon, the treasury

secretary, simply came and made statements on his own behalf that now have to be ratified by Congress. And, as far as I can see, only cut-down versions of these commitments will be ratified, if any at all.

So it is possible that none of the paltry offerings in the declaration, considered to be cause for such great hope for the peoples, will materialize.

Even so, Cuba presented 29 projects, and the spirit of those projects—none of which were approved in full—is reflected in some of the document's resolutions. Even the United States signed the document, but it lodged two formal reservations on Chapter 3, which concerns raw materials and is a fundamental issue. Point One in that chapter was about development planning, which later became development programming—the name was changed. Point Two concerned the integration of a Latin American common market. Point Three was about raw materials and problems related to their prices and markets. Point Four was the annual report to be prepared, with participation by economic ministers, in a different country in the Americas each year. Point Five, about making the Alliance for Progress better known, was practically eliminated. In its present form, Point Five is of no interest; Point Four is merely administrative, about the annual report; so the discussion centered around the other three points.

Not much importance was given to Latin American economic integration, and the United States waged its battles in Commissions One and Three.

Commission Three, where compañero Raúl León Torras, Cuban undersecretary of trade, dedicated a great deal of time and effort, was where the Latin American governments attained the best positions and where the United States lodged two formal reservations. The United States practically dominated the situation on Point One and established a general program that did not really have any important content for the peoples.

The conference was important because it has reduced the possibility that a foreign ministers' conference will be held in the near future; and eliminated the possibility of isolating Cuba. It is now possible for Cuba's voice to be heard all over Latin America, in spite of enormous difficulties such as the frequent distortions of Cuba's comments by the Uruguayan newspapers as well as the newspapers of other countries. Nevertheless, it was still possible to tell the people the truth.

The conference was also important because a new language was spoken there—not just that of Cuba, which spoke forthrightly, in the language of open rebelliousness, but also the language of those countries that are not willing to be dumb beasts serving the United States and that argued to obtain better treatment for the products made from their raw materials.

More than anything, it was important because of the new stance of the Brazilian government—or, rather, the position taken by the new Brazilian government, because the position is not new. Ever since President Quadros took office, he has spoken out in no uncertain terms in favor of the coexistence of all peoples on earth, relations with all peoples and a policy of peace.

I place considerable importance on the resolution that was adopted by a majority vote, which explicitly establishes the right of countries with different social systems to coexist in Latin America. It states—just a second, so I can read the exact words. It says:

> The active participation of the private sector is of basic importance to the desired process of economic development and integration, and, except in those countries where the free enterprise system does not exist, the programming of development by the appropriate national public bodies, far from hindering that participation, may facilitate and channel it, opening up new social benefits.

The original version did not contain the words “except in those countries where the free enterprise system does not exist,” which were proposed by Cuba. This was because in speaking of the active participation of the private sector, it was a contradiction in the case of Cuba, as the exploitation of human beings by others and the philosophy of free enterprise have been condemned here.

The countries in the second commission approved it by a simple majority—which was possible—of nine votes, after which it went to the plenary, where it was again approved, though with some variations—the original text was somewhat different. It was approved there by 11 votes—in other words, by the absolute majority, because there were 21 participating countries, and an absolute majority (11) was required—over the negative vote of the United States. Thus, the fact that countries that do not have a

free-enterprise regime can belong to the inter-American system was inserted into the final documents of the Punta del Este accord, or, rather, of the Latin American conference.

We proclaimed this as one of the achievements of the conference, and it provoked a violent, angry, inopportune reaction by [US] Treasury Secretary Dillon, who announced that he did not recognize Cuba and did not recognize peaceful coexistence—in short, that he was going to chew us up into little pieces that day or the next.

Those are the positive aspects of the conference, things that are unquestionably very important. The negative aspects are, as I have already told you, the fact that, once more, the United States spread the false idea that it is spending money to help the peoples. No such thing. First of all, it is not spending money, and, next, if it should spend any, it will not be to help the peoples; if it spends anything, it would be to help its own monopolies, which will return the money, sending it back to the United States.

So, as they say, “dust to dust,” and the dollars—at least the ones in Latin America—will keep going back to the United States. So, if those dollars are spent—which is a very big if, as it is much more probable that Congress will not even appropriate them—they will be for the monopolies in general, which, after using the money and making new profits, will send it back to the United States. That is a negative thing, and so is the poverty of the aspirations contained in this document.

In the field of education, Cuba has achieved practically everything that is proposed for the next 10 years, and it will achieve some of the things that it has not yet achieved and surpass those goals within five years.

We think that the per capita net rate of development of 2.5 percent is very low; we aspire to a rate of at least 10 percent. We had done some calculations—which Mr. Dillon did not like, either—and they showed that, if all the countries of Latin American had a growth rate of 2.5 percent and, based on it, tried to reach the standard of living the United States has now, it would take us 100 years to do so. And, if we tried to reach the standard of living the United States would have by then—because it would be growing, too, even though slowly—it would take us 500 years to do so. So, the “tremendous Alliance for Progress” means that only several generations later will our descendants be able to consider themselves to be on a par with

the United States. What our peoples want is a growth rate that will free them from poverty now, not think about how to go about it and keep getting put off, which is the plan of the United States.

The health plan is very limited, too, and it even makes some specifications we consider negative. It says that 70 percent of the houses will have water within 10 years. In other words, it is explicitly condemning 30 percent of the houses in Latin America's urban areas not to have running water or sewerage services, etc. In the countryside, 50 percent of the houses will not have these services.

The plan for housing construction was not approved. The only country that presented a draft in this regard was Cuba, supported by Brazil. The United States objected to it, however, and, in the end, the Cuban motion was rejected. Thus, the Alliance for Progress contains no specific plan for providing houses for the people. We had done some calculations which showed that it would cost around 2 billion pesos a year just to meet the housing deficit that will be created in the coming years. So the Alliance for Progress funds would be completely used just to fulfill the housing need.

The conference's housing plan began with a very wordy invocation; it spoke of a decade of vigorous democratic growth and of the achievements that the peoples would attain within the system of "representative democracy." It said that Latin America had been and was an example of freedom for all the peoples, and so on. And then it said that 70 percent of the houses in the urban areas and 50 percent of the ones in the countryside would have water and that we would equal the development of the United States in around 500 years, or attain its present development in 100 years. It said all this, but, naturally, in such a way that those who do not understand a few of these things—which is normal among the people—would not see it.

Moreover, the only document that was presented—apart from Cuba's—was one that does not contain any figures. Thus, everything was reduced to formulations such as:

> To promote, within the specific characteristics of each country, programs of integral agrarian reform aimed at the effective transformation, where this is required, of the structures to a fair system of land ownership and exploitation, with a view to replacing the

> system of large and small landholdings with a fair system of ownership.

This is nothing more than an empty exhortation because “within the specific characteristics of each country and where this is required” means that nobody will carry out an agrarian reform.

It says that the countries should “develop programs of health and hygiene, with a view to preventing disease, fighting against epidemics and, in short, defending the human potential.” This means nothing concrete. If anything, what this reference to “human potential” means is that the work force needed by the monopolies, in order to have people work for them, has to be defended.

It continues:

> To ensure that the workers receive fair remuneration and adequate working conditions; to establish efficient systems of worker-employer relations and procedures of consultation and cooperation between the authorities of the employers’ associations and the workers’ organizations, to promote socioeconomic development; to put an end to illiteracy—*this is the only concrete thing—extend*, in the shortest possible time, the benefits of elementary or primary education to all Latin Americans; and vastly expand the opportunities of secondary, technical and higher education.

In other words, it is a very broad plan, with a lot of very pretty words, but it does not force anybody to do anything and does not explain anything. This is what the Latin American peoples will realize is the result of two weeks’ deliberations at Punta del Este.

There is only one phrase in this last document that may commit the United States. It continues as follows:

> The United States, for its part, pledges to offer its financial and technical cooperation to achieve the goals of the Alliance for Progress.
>
> For that purpose, it will provide most of the financing of at least US$20 billion, mainly in public funds, that Latin America needs from

> all external sources during the next decade to complement its own efforts.

In other words, it pledges to provide most of the financing—at least US$20 billion—but Congress probably will not appropriate the money; or, if it does agree to the loans, they will never arrive.

And then it says,

> In the 12 months from March 13, 1961, date of the first declaration of the Alliance for Progress, the United States will provide over a billion dollars in public funds to contribute immediately to Latin America's economic and social progress.
>
> The United States intends that the loans for development will be long-term, and, when appropriate, they will be extended for up to 50 years, at a generally low rate of interest or without interest, as the case may be.

So the vagueness continues. This is the net result, my view of the pros and cons of the CIES conference. The balance sheet was positive for Cuba, but negative in the economic sphere because the United States once again pulled the wool over the peoples' eyes and, with the help of the corrupt press of all the countries, has made the people in some places believe that this Alliance offers some hope.

In general, in private talks, the delegates expressed the opinion that this was just one more meeting like so many others, and many of them were very philosophical about it.

As I said, they went to play roulette at the casino and go to parties; sometimes the chairs were empty, because all the members of a delegation had left and had no interest in the outcomes, because they knew that the results were more or less pre-determined and that the small countries with puppet governments could do nothing to change those results. So they adopted a more practical approach and sometimes did not even attend.

I think that I've talked enough, and the journalists should have a chance.

Moderator: Compañero Honorio Muñoz, would you like to ask the first question?

Journalist: Yes. Commander Guevara, even though the Cuban delegation's viewpoints and achievements at the Punta del Este conference were publicized in Cuba and you have just given us a clear and exhaustive critical appraisal of the conference, I believe that some points of Cuba's position, of its political focus, should be further clarified.

For example, in the conference you said, "The 'Alliance for Progress' is conceived within the imperialist framework, in order to save it." Why do you think this?

Che Guevara: This is an important point. Naturally, the United States has changed its system—but only formally, because the imperialist system cannot really change. What has changed is its system of relations with the Latin American countries. It has become aware of one fundamental thing, which is that the colonial system, even when it is the economic colonialism from which the Latin American peoples suffer, is in such a process of disintegration that it cannot last. The vestiges of feudalism have to disintegrate quickly.

The United States has drawn up a plan for ending the feudal relations of production—above all, in the countryside, where most of the Latin American countries have fundamental problems—and for carrying out a kind of agrarian reform. As it says, it will put an end to large and small landholdings—in other words, it will support the creation of medium-sized, mechanized landholdings, using agricultural workers instead of small peasants. This will promote greater productivity, which will make it possible to dump large quantities of products on the market, wipe out the parasitical feudal class and create a new class—no, probably not a new class, but a particular kind of bourgeoisie, linked to imports in each Latin American country, which will establish relations with the US monopolies and create mixed companies.

Those mixed companies will function under the system established in each country, except for their profits, which will be under the free exchange system and can be exported to the United States. Thus, everything that is volatile, such as the direct intervention of foreign capital in a country's economy, will be hidden. As happened here in Cuba, they will be called the "Cuban Electric Company," the "Colombian Telephone Company," the "Peruvian Iron Company," etc., and they will have an administrator in the

host country, the country where the raw material is, but the capital and financial control will be in US hands.

So, as I have already said, the United States will develop the country's production, do away with feudalism, create this new class and then initiate a stage of capitalist development in all of those countries—development that will, however, be distorted because the capital invested will not be independent. It will be the capital of the national bourgeoisie which has some conflict of interest with the monopolies, but is, nevertheless, tied to monopoly capital. It will therefore continue to contribute to the country's colonization, alleviate a little pressure and, naturally, provide a modest boost, along with the short-term investment measures in the economies of the most backward countries, where the danger of a social explosion is most evident.

This is happening, for example—and this is no secret—in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, nearly all the Central American and the Andean countries, where there is still large-scale feudalism. Estates are still sold in Peru "with all their workers." In other words, the workers are considered to be a part of the estate's value. Thus, a lot of work can still be done within the capitalist system to put an end to the most backward relations of production and still keep them within the imperialist system.

Moreover, all the manual labor that still exists in those countries can be eliminated. This is not a new experience. It was first employed by Britain, in its colonization of India, many years ago, when the introduction of English capital wiped out the feudal relations of production in many regions — eliminated the feudal relations of production so that India would become a great exporter of raw materials to Britain.

The United States is trying to perfect the English system and turn Latin America into an efficient producer of raw materials for the United States, doing away with the points of greatest conflict in the relations of production, such as—in nearly all of the countries—the relations between the small peasants and the feudal lords.

I do not know if I've explained this clearly.

Moderator: Compañero Ithiel León.

Journalist: Commander Guevara, I would like you to expand a little on the previous question, because it has been said that, all things considered, the Alliance for Progress will bring about greater unemployment, a drop in wages and inflation in the countries in which it operates.

Che Guevara: Well, it is not exactly the Alliance for Progress but the process that will bring about that outcome. I described this as the process that Latin America would follow—and that it will follow in any case, with or without the Alliance for Progress.

To be precise, I said that the Alliance for Progress was not going to result in any significant amount of capital for Latin America and that, even if it were to do so, the capital would be provided with conditions set by imperialism, and the investments would be channeled toward those places where monopoly capital wanted it to go.

In other words, to all the extracting companies in Latin America that are going to produce minerals—strategic raw materials for the United States—the producers of raw materials are also going to produce other raw materials (for example, agricultural ones) that are important for the United States.

If investments are made under the Alliance for Progress, all they will do is bring about a minor upsurge in business, and that upsurge will only mean greater profits for those companies, which will re-export them to the United States, and then we will be back at square one, right? But the process continues; the increase in production when there is no real increase in markets—the capitalist market is not in a stage of expansion right now—means that there is more pressure weighing on trade and the producers are forced to increase productivity in order to lower the cost of the product.

An increase in productivity in the capitalist system automatically means unemployment. Unemployment, when there are no alternative jobs, means a lowering of real wages. Moreover, as in the struggles that ensue when several countries produce the same raw material, there is an effective decrease in the amount of money received, which also means a shortage of imports, and the shortage of imports results in higher prices—an increase in the cost of living. All together, the increase in the cost of living, unemployment, and the lowering of real wages caused by the number of people who are unemployed creates hunger and a chain of bankruptcies and losses because of the decrease in the market—all those people who have

stopped consuming. And, naturally, this brings about a drop in the amount of taxes collected, an imbalance between the amount of taxes the governments receive and their liabilities, which gives rise to inflation and leads to the total deterioration of the economy.

At that moment, I said, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to which all Latin American countries belong, would intervene to take monetary or anti-infringement monetary measures. Those measures would mean a further curtailment of credit in order to try to reduce inflation by cutting back on the amount of money in circulation instead of reducing inflation by increasing production. In order to increase production, it would be necessary to do away with the existing relations of production, to do away with the present relations of agricultural production and have the people take over the factories—in short, carry out a real social revolution.

Since it is impossible that the IMF will decide on or advise this, the situation will deteriorate, and I pointed out that countries would have only two choices—or, rather, would have to choose between two alternatives.

They can diversify their foreign trade, adopting a new policy of selling to the rest of the world—which was the basis of our own development, in contrast with trading mainly with the United States. This will bring about a series of contradictions that are already known: the monopolies will become aggressive; the country will have to take new measures; it will become necessary to depend more and more on the people; and, as is only logical, the people, too, will demand more. The position held by the bourgeoisie will challenged, and this may lead to a social revolution—or, in any case, to a situation in which the national bourgeoisie is in constant conflict with monopoly capital.

The other alternative is to confront the people’s discontent, to follow the directives of the IMF and other such agencies, to control the people’s exasperation with drastic measures and to initiate a stage of very serious civil strife. An administration facing this situation will be voted out of office, the new administration that replaces it will renew the struggle to diversify trade, and the struggle with the people will begin again. This was explained succinctly and well in the script of one of Sartre’s movies some years ago, called “L’Engrenage.”

This process of administrations being voted in and out is always permeated with fear of making the definitive decision, which is that of

taking over the means of production and handing them over to the people, as was done in Cuba, which has enabled us to take a big step toward socialist revolution.

That was what I said in my final address to the Punta del Este [conference].

Moderator: Compañero Gregorio Ortega.

Journalist: After the Punta del Este conference, Commander Guevara, you went to Brazil. What can you tell us about your meeting with Janio Quadros?

Che Guevara: It was a very short meeting. President Quadros paid me several honors. The first was that of waiting to chat with me for a few moments, because he had already promised to inaugurate an iron and steel plant in one of the states in Brazil, so it could not be a very long talk.

Quadros has already talked about the results of that conversation, in which he simply reaffirmed Brazil's position of resolute support for Cuba, of support for the people's self-determination. We talked a little about the economic mission that is in Cuba right now and about the Brazilian government's decision to come to a rapid agreement on initiating new aspects of trade with us. And, in a demonstration of affection for our government—not for me personally, but for the Cuban government—the highest Brazilian decoration was bestowed on me. This sums up my talk with President Quadros.

Moderator: Compañero Honorio Muñoz.

Journalist: Without departing from the Punta del Este conference, what can you tell us about one of the peripheral episodes that is least known here and which UPI reported on, if not today, then recently? UPI says, and other journalists—South Americans, I think—also state that, on one occasion, you met with a Mr. Goodwin, who, I think, is a personal delegate of Mr. Kennedy. What can you tell us about this? Did that meeting take place, or not? And, in general, what can you tell us about it?

Che Guevara: It is true that I met with Mr. Goodwin, but he was not really Kennedy's envoy. He is one of Kennedy's advisers and he was at the Punta del Este conference.

Some Brazilian friends invited me to a small, intimate get-together, and Mr. Goodwin was there. As some of the agencies reported, we talked, chatting on personal subjects. We were both the guests of a third person, a Brazilian official, and we talked as private individuals, not as representatives of our governments. I was not authorized to have any kind of a talk with a US official, and he was not authorized to have one with me. So with my limited English—which, as you have seen, is quite poor—and Mr. Goodwin's Spanish, which is nonexistent, we exchanged a few words with the help of a Brazilian official, who served as translator.

At one point, Mr. Goodwin said that he neither represented nor was authorized to speak in the name of his government but that he would convey some observations that Cuba made to his government. I limited myself to setting forth Cuba's publicly established position: that we are willing to talk; that we do not seek a quarrel of any kind but will take all the way to the end any quarrel that is forced on us; that we want to be part of the Latin American system; that we are united culturally with the rest of Latin America and want to remain so; and that we insist on our right to be treated like any other country in Latin America or in the Organization of American States, only with a different social and economic organization, and that our absolute right to have whatever friends we want, anywhere in the world, be respected.

In short, it was a brief, courteous, cool exchange, as might be expected of two functionaries of countries that are officially enemies, right? It was not seen as important until some journalist or functionary—perhaps of the Argentine embassy or government or a Brazilian journalist; I do not really know who—publicized it. That was all.

Moderator: Compañero Ithiel León.

Journalist: Commander, I have heard that the delegation representing Trujillo's son's regime [in the Dominican Republic] also signed the

Alliance for Progress accord. Do you know what that country's situation is within the so-called inter-American system?

Che Guevara: Well, you know, it was not possible to speak about politics in the CIES conference. We did not have any relations with the Balaguer administration, and the situation in Santo Domingo is very special. The delegates from the Dominican Republic did not say anything in the conference. They abstained from all discussion, though they always voted — naturally, the way the United States did. Sometimes their chief delegate was not there; I do not know where he was, but he was absent many times.

The government's attitude there was very correct, because it was totally alienated from the conference. There was never any talk of excluding the Dominican Republic from the Alliance for Progress. Naturally, there was no talk of excluding anybody. For example, we asked several times if Cuba would be included in the Alliance for Progress, if Cuba would be entitled to Alliance for Progress funds, and Mr. Dillon did not reply. Naturally, the chairperson of the assembly did not know; he had no reason for knowing—he was the delegate of another country who had been elected there—and he asked Mr. Dillon, but Mr. Dillon did not answer him, either. So, the question remained, like in a mystery story, up to the last day, when Dillon made a final brusque remark, saying that Cuba would not get anything from the Alliance for Progress. He then held a press conference in which he spoke about Cuba, naturally, but the journalists also asked him about Stroessner's regime, in Paraguay, and about the Dominican Republic. He gave an evasive reply but let it be known that the Dominican Republic would be included in the Alliance for Progress and would be one of the countries to benefit.

More or less tacitly, it is assumed that Trujillo's death has already lessened the guilt of the other members of the ruling team and that it can already be called democratic, because the father died, and all the others are very, very minor figures, and their punishments will be very, very short. So that situation remained hovering in the air, even though not a word was spoken there about the Dominican regime.

Moderator: Compañero Gregorio Ortega.

Journalist: How did the Uruguayan people express their solidarity with our revolution, commander?

Che Guevara: The Uruguayan people expressed their solidarity in practically every possible way. Their enthusiasm was really moving, and it caused a kind of upset in protocol and practice for us: the Cuban delegates were the only ones that the people—the few workers, because it was a typical beach resort—waited for to applaud and greet. It is important to note this: Punta del Este is a beach resort around 170 kilometers from Montevideo, the capital, and it has a harsh climate in the winter, the season it was when we were in the Southern Hemisphere, so there was nobody around—no workers, no other people. Therefore, except for a few isolated instances, it was impossible to experience the Uruguayan people's solidarity at Punta del Este.

But, when we arrived in Montevideo, it was tremendous. I had to give a talk on Cuban economic development in the assembly hall of the university, which was a rather small place. It was jam-packed. It had been attacked by groups of students—financed by the United States, of course—and, at midday, the university official had had to open the doors pistol in hand; then those students threw stink-bombs all over the assembly hall. I gave my talk in an atmosphere of chlorophyll room fresheners, but the people there were very enthusiastic—so much so that I had to ask them many times to restrain themselves, because I had promised the government that I would do everything possible to avoid incidents.

The people were also wonderfully disciplined and had a great spirit of cooperation, in addition to tremendous enthusiasm, which really made me feel I was in Cuba. But when I left—and how this happened is not clear— it seems that somebody fired on some of the cars or simply shot over the people's heads to provoke a reaction. So the meeting, which had been filled with great enthusiasm and had been held in a perfectly normal way, was clouded by the death of a professor [Arbelio Ramírez] of the institute, who had come to hear me. He was shot in the neck and died a few minutes later. The people reacted to that violently, falling on the presumed attackers; the police intervened; and there was a kind of showdown between the police and the demonstrators.

I found out later that there were more incidents the next day, at the professor's funeral. In addition, the Government Council met and timidly denounced the episode, saying that it was not "diplomatic"—something to that effect—for a guest at the CIES conference to take part in a political meeting. Naturally, I had not taken part in a political meeting because they had said it was to be a technical meeting, and a talk about economic development has to be technical. Of course, when it is Cuba's economic development that is being discussed, and when the conditions for economic development are such that the people assume the political direction of the government, take over the factories, carry out an agrarian reform and, in passing, do away with the oppressor's army, as well, then, naturally, the basic theses of economic development turn into political theses. But we have always said that you cannot separate political and economic issues.

In addition, I had taken all the necessary precautions: I had spoken with the [Uruguayan] president and the minister of the interior and said that I wanted to attend the talk but left it to the government to make the decision, and they expressly authorized my participation.

On the afternoon before the conference, one of the members of the Government Council, who had been president of the university the preceding year, made a radio address to the army asking it to take charge of the situation—to prevent subversion and a coup d'état. When we left, the situation was very tense.

After all those events, the Uruguayan people went to the hotel where I was staying to express their affection in a thousand ways. There were so many representatives of groups that the owner of the hotel decided that delegations could not go upstairs, so there were some incidents. I could not speak with all of the delegations that came to see me, which would have been nearly impossible anyway, because there were so many of them. The people's enthusiasm was very great at all times.

Moderator: Compañero Honorio Muñoz.

Journalist: Che Guevara, at Punta del Este, you challenged imperialism to an emulation contest between its plan, called the Alliance for Progress, and what our country has achieved. Our country, which is carrying out a socialist revolution, has the support of the socialist world, good relations

with many countries that are not socialist and the friendship of the peoples of the world. On what do you base your confidence that we will win that competition?

Che Guevara: On economics. That was a meeting in which they wanted to show everybody the possibilities of "representative democratic development," etc., and they were talking about a rate of development of 2.5 percent. That figure alone destroyed the challenge, because we had a tremendous advantage: for us, in Cuba's present conditions, 10 percent is a slow rate of development; 2.5 percent, in Latin America's conditions, is considered an optimal or close to optimal rate of development. So our minimum was four times as great as their optimum. In terms of economic development, this is an immense difference.

Moreover, I was led to issue that challenge because of my certainty that planned development is the only way of effectively guaranteeing that every economic policy that is followed will be applied fully and that correct policies of economic planning can only be developed, and development with high growth rates can only be achieved, when the people have control over the means of production. As I have said, it is very easy to see what the final result or the results at any moment—in 10 years or right now—will be.

It is enough to examine the goals that were proposed in education; we have already reached them. For example, one of the paragraphs says,

> That the following be adopted as goals of the Alliance for Progress in the field of education, to be reached in the next 10 years:
>
> (a) at least six years of free, obligatory primary education for all children of school age.

We set ourselves a goal of nine years. In the first program, they had proposed four years. We proposed nine years, because this year we're beginning a system of nine years of free, obligatory education for the Cuban people.

> (b) The carrying out of systematic campaigns of adult education, promoting community development, job training, cultural development

and the eradication of illiteracy.

This is vague and speaks of the eradication of illiteracy, which we have already achieved to a very large extent this year and will fully accomplish next year, when we wipe out the last few pockets of illiteracy. And this is a 10-year plan [of the Alliance for Progress]. We are already advancing rapidly in providing job training and cultural development.

> (c) The reform and extension of high school education, so that a much higher proportion of the new generation will have an opportunity to continue their general education.

We have proposed to extend high school education to all young people of school age and to reform education so much that we completely nationalize it and place all the country's means of education at the service of the people.

> (d) The preparation of studies to determine what skilled labor is required for the development of industry, agrarian reform and agriculture; plans for social development and public administration at all levels; and the establishment of crash programs for training and follow-up programs for those personnel.

We have already done all this, so it is easy for us to see that, since they need 10 years to do what we have already done, Cuba is bound to win this contest.

And then it talks about "the reform, extension, and improvement of higher education, so that a much higher proportion of young people have access to it." In other words, there is a great lack of precision in the Alliance for Progress mandate, while we are already giving scholarships and are increasing the number of university students, quite substantially in the most important disciplines.

Some other proposals even include some Cuban proposals, for example:

> (g) The intensification of exchanges among students, teachers, professors, researchers and other specialists, in order to stimulate

> mutual understanding and make the best possible use of the means of information and research.

This is based on a Cuban proposal, which was changed, of course; our version was better documented and more precise than this one, but at least it is here. Another says:

> The establishment of a system of scholarships and other forms of social and economic assistance for students in order to reduce the number of dropouts, especially in rural areas, and to ensure effective equal opportunity to education at all levels.

This, too, is based on a Cuban proposal for establishing full scholarships—here, the delegates took out the word “complete,” or “full”—which Cuba is also doing to a large extent.

The public health program and the housing program—which does not even exist—clearly show that the Alliance for Progress cannot compete at all with Cuba’s development, not in the economic sphere, and much less in the social sphere, where Cuba’s progress is even greater.

Moderator: Compañero Ithiel León.

Journalist: During your trip, commander, in addition to meeting with President Janio Quadros, you also met with another head of state, President Arturo Frondizi of Argentina. What can you tell us about this other meeting?

Che Guevara: As you know, my meeting with Frondizi was held in rather abnormal conditions. In cases of personal meetings, I let the head of state or host officials of the nation that has received our officials issue their account of the meeting. The meeting with President Frondizi was held behind closed doors, and I believe that President Frondizi is the one who is authorized, in this case, to make a statement and say what we talked about. He has already done so; he issued statements today referring in a laudatory, positive way to Cuba and especially to the people’s self-determination—which is vital to us, because we do not expect the other Latin American peoples to defend our

social system, but we do want them to defend our right to have the social system we choose, which is what President Frondizi has done.

In addition, I had another meeting, with another head of state, President Haedo. It was very cordial and took place in Uruguay; there is not any secret about it. President Haedo loves jokes, and we were in a jovial mood, swapping jokes and drinking *mate,* which is an old habit I haven't lost and which I rediscovered in Uruguay. It was really a very pleasant meeting, held just after the president met with Mr. Dillon, so the priority was the United States first and Cuba second.

Moderator: Compañero Gregorio Ortega.

Journalist: With our questions, commander, we have asked you to expand on the summary you gave of the Punta del Este conference. We do not know if we have left anything out. Would you like to make a statement summing up the results of the Punta del Este conference for Latin America —and for the Cuban people, of course?

Che Guevara: I think that, what with my summary and your questions, everything important has already been said, though some explanation of the final vote, the voting in the commission, may be lacking. I do not remember what its name was, but it was the main commission of the conference, to which the papers of the four working commissions were brought. They were divided into chapters.

When we abstained from voting on the first declaration, which was called the Declaration to the Peoples of the Americas—we did not vote against it, we abstained, and I have already read you some paragraphs of that declaration—we explained why we were abstaining. Then we also abstained on the Punta del Este accord, and then also on the attached resolutions, which were about socioeconomic development, economic integration (we voted for the section on economic integration), basic export products (on which we abstained), the Annual Assessment of Socioeconomic Progress (which we voted for), and Public Opinion and the Alliance for Progress (which we voted against). This last is the title to which the original US paper was reduced. Though whittled down, it was still encumbered with a range of matters that were useless for an economic

conference and bearing a considerable load of poison for the peoples of Latin America, in the form of subsidies and the regimentation of culture.

At first, there was a reference to a “common market of culture,” as if it were a great conquest of Latin America; that phrase was used to describe Point Five. The refutations were so harsh—and not only ours, but several other countries, as well—that this phrase was left out.

The only thing we voted for was the Annual Assessment of Socioeconomic Progress, because Cuba can check its progress in that assessment every year, and the results of the challenge can be seen. So we will be there every year, showing what we have done and reminding the others that the document was signed and that a pledge was made to the peoples. That was the only thing we voted for. We abstained on all the others except the point on “Public Opinion and the Alliance for Progress,” which we voted against.

I think that the main results of the conference are clear: what the United States proposed, what it got and what it did not get—and what it did not get is much more important than what it got. Then there was what Cuba proposed (I think it got nearly everything) and the phenomenon of the rise of other Latin American countries to an important plane in the political balance of forces of the Americas. This is particularly true of Brazil, whose decisions (perhaps for the first time in many years, or even for the first time in the history of “Pan-Americanism”) now have to be taken into consideration in Washington and on Wall Street and cannot be ignored.

So those are the final results of this episode in the struggle between the Latin American peoples and imperialism, the ministerial CIES conference at Punta del Este. It is a struggle that has not been decided in favor of anybody, but this episode may well have been a battle that Cuba—or, rather, the progressive forces in Latin America—won. It should be repeated in the struggles of Latin American countries at the ministerial level, in their struggles against imperialist aggression, against economic aggression and to guide the Latin American peoples. It should also be repeated in the daily reaffirmation of our aspirations to have the rest of Latin America share our future, with a fairer social system.

All this is to say that time will tell what the real results of the conference have been. It was a battle that may be just the first in a series of battles that imperialism will lose, or it may not be so important. It was held

only a short time ago, and too short a time especially for those of us who participated, and who, therefore, have a rather distorted view of its problems—to be able to make an objective assessment.

But, yes, I believe the final results have been positive.

Letter (1961)

Letter to Mr. Robert Starkie

Havana
June 12, 1961
Year of Education

Mr. Robert Starkie
Rocamora Bros., Ltd.
35 Wingold
Toronto 19, Ontario, Canada

Dear Sir,

This is in response to your letter of May 19, which I received a few days ago.

Two aspects of your offer are of interest to us. You offer to install factories for producing insecticides: for veterinary use; for use in agriculture, especially for fruit; fungicides; and fumigators for land and for stored products. We are interested in installing all of those factories in Cuba, but, in our country, the exploitation of human beings by others has been ended and there are no possibilities for establishing new privately owned factories, so we cannot accept the establishment of factories that are dependent on a foreign company.

If you are interested in selling us machinery with a long-term contract for supplying the raw materials that we cannot obtain here and with a payment formula that is acceptable to the country—which lacks convertible

currency right now—we would be very interested in holding discussions in this regard.

Sincerely,

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

1962

Articles

This essay was written between October and November 1962 in Cuba, but was not published until after Che Guevara's death, when it was published in *Verde Olivo*, October 6, 1968.

Tactics and Strategy for the Latin American Revolution

> *Tactics show us how to use armed forces in combat and strategy teaches us how to use combat encounters in order to obtain the war's objective.*
> — Karl von Clausewitz

I begin this work with a quotation from Clausewitz, the military author who fought against Napoleon and who theorized so brilliantly about war; Lenin loved to quote him because of the clarity of his thinking, in spite of the fact that he was, of course, a bourgeois analyst.

Tactics and strategy are the two main elements in the art of war, but war and politics are intimately related by a common denominator: the effort to reach a specific goal, whether it be annihilation of the adversary in armed conflict or the taking of political power.

But analysis of the essential tactics and strategies that rule political or military struggles cannot be reduced to a schematic formula.

The richness of each one of these concepts can be measured only by combining practice with the analysis of the complex activities that they imply.

There are no unalterable tactical and strategic objectives. Sometimes tactical objectives attain strategic importance, and other times strategic objectives become merely tactical elements. The thorough study of the

relative importance of each element permits the full utilization, by the revolutionary forces, of all of the facts and circumstances leading up to the great and final strategic objective: *the taking of power.*

Power is the *sine qua non* strategic objective of the revolutionary forces, and everything must be subordinated to this basic endeavor.

But the taking of power, in this world polarized by two forces of extreme disparity and absolute incompatibility of interests, cannot be limited to the boundaries of a single geographic or social unit. The seizure of power is a worldwide objective of the revolutionary forces. To conquer the future is the strategic element of revolution; freezing the present is the counterstrategy motivating the forces of world reaction today, for they are on the defensive.

In this worldwide struggle, position is very important. At times it is decisive. Cuba, for example, is a vanguard outpost overlooking the extremely broad stretches of the economically distorted world of Latin America. Cuba's example is a beacon, a guiding light for all the peoples of the Americas. The Cuban outpost is of great strategic value to the major contenders who at this moment dispute their hegemony of the world: imperialism and socialism.

Its value would be different if it had been located in another geographic or social setting. Its value was different prior to the revolution when it merely constituted a tactical element for the imperialist world. Its value has increased, not only because it is an open door to the Americas but because, added to the strength of its strategic, military and tactical position, is the power of its moral influence. "Moral missiles" are such a devastatingly effective weapon that they have become the most important element in determining Cuba's value. That is why, to analyze each element in the political struggle, one cannot extract it from its particular set of circumstances. All the antecedents serve to reaffirm a line or position consistent with its great strategic objectives.

Relating this discussion to the Americas, one must ask the necessary question: What are the tactical elements that must be used to achieve the major objective of taking power in this part of the world? Is it possible or not, given the present conditions in our continent, to achieve it (socialist power, that is) by peaceful means? We emphatically answer that, in the great majority of cases, it is not possible. The most that could be achieved

would be the formal takeover of the bourgeois superstructure of power, and the transition to socialism by that government; having achieved formal power under the established bourgeois legal system there would still be a very violent struggle against all who attempt in one way or another to check its progress toward new social structures.

This is one of the most debated and most important topics, and possibly, it is a topic on which our revolution most disagrees with other revolutionary movements of Latin America. We must clearly state our position and try to analyze its rationale.

Today, Latin America is a volcano. Although not in a state of eruption it is shocked by subterranean vibrations announcing the volcano's coming. There are visible and audible signs everywhere. The Second Declaration of Havana[1] is the concrete expression of those subterranean movements. It strives to achieve an awareness of its objective, that is, an awareness of the necessity and even the certainty of revolutionary change. This volcano in the Americas is not divorced from the revolutionary movements appearing in the contemporary world in this crucial moment of confrontation between two opposing forces and conceptualizations of history.

We could refer to our homeland with the following words from the Second Declaration of Havana:

> What is the history of Cuba if it is not the history of Latin America? And what is the history of Latin America if it is not the history of Asia, Africa and Oceania? And what is the history of all of these peoples if it is not the history of the most merciless and cruel exploitation by imperialism throughout the modern world?

The Americas, like Africa, Asia and Oceania, are part of a single whole where economic forces have been distorted by imperialism. But not all the continents present similar characteristics; the forms of economic exploitation—imperialist, colonialist or neocolonialist—employed by the European bourgeois forces have had to cope not only with the liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Oceania, but also with the penetration of US imperialist capital. This has created different correlations of forces in different areas, and has permitted the peaceful transition toward national independent or neocolonialist bourgeois systems.

But in the Americas such systems have not developed. Latin America is the parade ground of US imperialism, and there are no economic forces in the world capable of supporting the struggle that national bourgeoisies have waged against imperialism elsewhere; and these forces, relatively much weaker than in other regions, back down and compromise with imperialism.

The frightened bourgeoisie is faced with a terrible choice: submission to foreign capital or destruction by domestic popular forces. The Cuban revolution has accentuated this dilemma; the polarization created by its example means the only alternative that remains is to sell out. When this takes place, when the pact is sanctified, domestic reactionary forces ally themselves with the most powerful international reactionary forces, and the peaceful development of social revolutions is prevented.

Pointing out the present situation, the Second Declaration of Havana states:

> In many Latin American countries revolution is inevitable. This fact is not determined by the will of any person. It is determined by the appalling conditions of exploitation under which the Latin American people live, the development of a revolutionary consciousness in the masses, the worldwide crisis of imperialism and the universal liberation movements of the subjugated nations.
>
> Today's unrest is an unmistakable symptom of rebellion. The insides of the continent are stirring after having witnessed four centuries of slavery, semislavery and feudal exploitation of human beings by others; from the indigenous peoples and slaves brought from Africa to the national groups that arose later—whites, blacks, mulattoes, mestizos and Indians—who today share pain, humiliation and the Yankee yoke, and share hope for a better tomorrow.

We can conclude, therefore, that when faced with the decision to bring about more socially just systems in the Americas, we must think fundamentally in terms of armed struggle. There exists, nevertheless, some possibility of peaceful transition; this is pointed out in the studies of classical Marxist authors and it is sanctioned in the declaration of the parties. Yet under the current conditions in Latin America, every minute that goes by makes a peaceful commitment more difficult. The latest events

in Cuba are an example of the cohesion that exists between the bourgeois governments and the imperialist aggressor on the fundamental aspects of the conflict.

Remember this point we have continually emphasized: Peaceful transition is not the achievement of formal power by elections or through public opinion without direct combat, but rather it is the establishment of socialist power, with all its attributes, without the use of armed struggle. It is reasonable, therefore, that all the progressive forces do not have to initiate the road of armed revolution but must use—until the very last moment—every possibility of legal struggle within the bourgeois conditions.

With regard to the form the revolutionary movements must adopt after seizing power, a number of very interesting questions of interpretation arise that reflect the times. The Declaration of the 81 Communist Parties states:

> Our epoch, the main feature of which is the transition from capitalism to socialism, as initiated by the great October [1917] socialist revolution in Russia, is the epoch of the struggle between two diametrically opposed social systems; it is the epoch of socialist revolutions and national liberation revolutions; it is the epoch of the collapse of imperialism and the liquidation of the colonial system; it is the epoch of the constant advance of more and more peoples on the socialist road; it is the epoch of the triumph of socialism and universal communism.
>
> The main feature of our epoch is the fact that the international socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in the development of human society.

It is stated, therefore, that although the people’s struggle for liberation is very important, that which characterizes the present time is the transition from capitalism to socialism.

There are countries from all the exploited continents whose social systems have reached different levels of development, but almost all of them have strong social divisions with feudal characteristics and a heavy dependence on foreign capital. It would be logical to think that in the struggle for liberation, following the natural process of development,

countries could obtain national democratic governments in which the bourgeoisie more or less predominates. This has occurred in many cases. Nevertheless, those peoples who have had to use force to achieve independence have made greater advances in the path of social reforms and many of them are building socialism. Cuba and Algeria are the most recent examples of the effects of armed struggle on the development of social transformation. If we conclude that the possibility of the peaceful road is almost nonexistent in the Americas, we can point out that it is very probable that the outcome of victorious revolutions in this area of the world will produce regimes of a socialist structure.

Rivers of blood will flow before this is achieved. Algeria's wounds have not yet healed; Vietnam continues to bleed; Angola struggles bravely and alone for its independence; Venezuela, whose patriots identify with the Cuban cause, has recently demonstrated its lofty and heart-felt solidarity with our revolution; Guatemala is waging a difficult, almost underground struggle. All of these are good examples.

The blood of the people is our most sacred treasure, but it must be shed in order to save more blood in the future.

Other continents have achieved liberation from colonialism and have established more or less strong bourgeois regimes. This has been accomplished without, or almost without, violence but we must realize that following the logic of events up to this moment, this constantly developing national bourgeoisie will at a given moment find itself in contradiction with other sectors of the population. When the yoke of the oppressor country is removed, this national bourgeoisie is no longer a revolutionary force and transforms itself into an exploiting class, renewing the cycle of social struggle. It may or may not advance on a peaceful road, but irrevocably two great forces will confront each other: the exploiters and the exploited.

The dilemma of our time, regarding how power should be seized, has not escaped the attention of Yankee imperialists. They also want a "peaceful transition." They favor the liquidation of the old feudal structures still existing in Latin America and want to ally with the most advanced sectors of the national bourgeoisies, carrying out some monetary reforms, some reform in the land structure, and a moderate industrialization, preferably in consumer goods, with technology and raw materials imported from the United States.

The perfected formula consists of allying the national bourgeoisie with foreign interests; together they create new industries in the country, setting up tariff advantages in these industries of such magnitude that they permit the total exclusion of competition from other imperialist countries. Profits obtained in this manner can be taken out of the country with protection afforded by the many loopholes in exchange regulations.

Through this new and more intelligent system of exploitation, the "nationalist" country assumes the role of protecting US interests—setting up tariffs that allow extra profit, which the North Americans re-export to their country. Naturally, the sale price of articles, without competition, is fixed by the monopolies.

All of this is reflected in the projects of the Alliance for Progress, which are nothing more than imperialist attempts to block the development of the revolutionary conditions of the people by sharing a small quantity of the profits with the native exploiting classes, thus making them into firm allies against the highly exploited classes. In other words, they suppress the internal contradictions of the capitalist system as much as possible.

As we mentioned previously, there are no forces in America capable of intervening in this economic struggle, and therefore the game of imperialism is very simple. The only possibility left is the spontaneous development of the European Common Market, under German leadership, which could reach an economic strength sufficient to compete with Yankee capitalists in this region. But the development of contradictions and their violent resolution is so rapid and so explosive today that it appears that Latin America will much earlier become the battlefield of exploiters and exploited than the scene of an economic struggle between two imperialisms.

It should be said that the plans of the Alliance for Progress will not materialize because objective conditions and the consciousness of the masses have matured too far for them to fall into such a naive trap.

The decisive factor today is whether the imperialist-Creole-bourgeois front is consistent. During the recent OAS vote there were no discordant voices on fundamental problems and only a few governments tried to cover up their shame with legalistic formulas, without denouncing the aggressive tendency of these resolutions, which are contrary to law.

The fact that Cuba had nuclear missiles served as a pretext for all to side with the United States; the Bay of Pigs did not produce any different

response. They know very well that these are defensive weapons, they also know who the aggressor is.

Even though they do not say so, the fact is that they all recognize the true danger posed by the Cuban revolution. The most submissive countries and consequently, the most cynical, talk about the threat of Cuban subversion, and they are right. The greatest threat of the Cuban revolution is its own example, its revolutionary ideas, the fact that the government has been able to increase the combativity of the people, led by a leader of world stature, to heights seldom equaled in history.

Here is the electrifying example of a people prepared to suffer nuclear immolation so that its ashes may serve as a foundation for new societies. When an agreement was reached by which the nuclear missiles were removed, without asking our people, we were not relieved or thankful for the truce; instead we denounced the move in our own voice. We have demonstrated our firm stand, our own position, our decision to fight, even if alone, against all dangers and against the nuclear menace of Yankee imperialism.

This causes other peoples to stir. They hear the call of the new voice emanating from Cuba, stronger than all fears, lies or prejudices, stronger than hunger and all the techniques used to try and destroy our people. It is stronger than the fear of any reprisal, the most barbarous punishment, the cruelest death, or the most bestial oppression of the exploiters. A new voice, clear and precise, has sounded in every corner of Our America.

That has been our mission and we have fulfilled it, and we shall continue to fulfill it with all the decisiveness of our revolutionary convictions.

We could ask: Is this the only road? Why not utilize the imperialist contradictions? Why not seek the backing of the bourgeois sectors that have been struck and humiliated by imperialism? Could we not find a less severe, less self-destructive formula than this Cuban position? Is it not possible to ensure Cuba’s survival through a combination of force and diplomatic maneuvers? We answer: When faced with brute force, use force and determination; when faced by those who want to destroy you, you can only reply with the will to fight to the very last person in order to defend yourselves.

This formula is valid for all of Latin America in the face of those who want to remain in power, against the will of the people, at any cost. Fire and blood must be used until the last exploiter has been annihilated.

How can the revolution be carried out in Latin America? Let us listen again to the Second Declaration of Havana:

> In our countries two circumstances are linked: underdeveloped industry and a feudal agrarian system. No matter how hard the living conditions of the urban workers are, the rural population lives under even worse conditions of oppression and exploitation. With few exceptions, the rural population also constitutes the absolute majority, sometimes more than 70 percent of the population in the Latin American countries.
>
> Not counting the landowners, who often live in the cities, this great mass earns its livelihood by working for miserable wages as peons on plantations. They till the soil under conditions of exploitation no different from those of the Middle Ages. These circumstances determine in Latin America that the poor rural population constitutes a tremendous potential revolutionary force.
>
> The armies in Latin America are set up and equipped for conventional warfare. They are the force through which the power of the exploiting classes is maintained. When they are confronted with the irregular warfare of peasants based on their home ground, they become absolutely powerless; they lose 10 men for every revolutionary fighter who falls. Demoralization among them mounts rapidly when they are beset by an invisible and invincible army that provides them with no opportunity to display their military academy tactics and their military fanfare, of which they boast so heavily, and which they use to repress the city workers and students.
>
> The initial struggle of the small fighting units is constantly nurtured by new forces; the mass movement begins to grow bold, bit by bit the old order breaks into a thousand pieces, and that is when the working class and the urban masses decide the battle.
>
> What is it that from the very beginning of the fight makes these units invincible, regardless of the numbers, strength and resources of

> their enemies? It is the people's support, and they can count on ever-increasing mass support.
>
> The peasantry, however, is a class that because of the ignorance in which it has been kept and the isolation in which it lives, requires the revolutionary and political leadership of the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals. It cannot launch the struggle and achieve victory alone.
>
> In the present historical conditions of Latin America, the national bourgeoisie cannot lead the antifeudal and anti-imperialist struggle. Experience demonstrates that in our nations this class—even when its interests clash with those of Yankee imperialism—has been incapable of confronting imperialism, paralyzed by fear of social revolution and frightened by the clamor of the exploited masses.

That is what the Second Declaration of Havana says and it can be viewed as an outline of revolution in Latin America. We cannot think of alliances that are not entirely led by the working class, we cannot think of collaboration with a frightened and treacherous bourgeoisie that destroys the forces on which it based itself to attain power. The weapons must be in the hands of the people and all of Latin America must become a battlefield. The peasants have to fight for their land, the oppressor must be killed mercilessly in ambushes, and the revolutionary must fight and die with honor. This is what counts.

This is the panorama of Latin America, a continent preparing to fight, and the sooner the people take up arms and bring their machetes down on the landowners, industrialists, bankers and all exploiters, as well as their main instrument, the oppressor army, the better.

Whether guerrilla action should always be the tactic or whether it is feasible to institute other actions as the central axis of the struggle can be argued at length. Our opposition to using any other tactic in Latin America is based on two arguments:

First: Accepting as truth the statement that the enemy will fight to stay in power, one must think in terms of the destruction of the oppressor army. In order to destroy it, a people's army must be raised to oppose it directly. This army will not spring up spontaneously; it will have to arm itself with the weapons taken from the enemy's arsenal, and this implies a very long

and hard struggle in which the popular forces and their leaders will always be exposed to attack from superior forces, without adequate conditions for defense and maneuverability. On the other hand, a guerrilla nucleus established in favorable terrain guarantees the security and permanence of the revolutionary command and the urban contingents can be directed from this central command of the people's army. They can carry out actions of incalculable importance.

The eventual destruction of urban groups will not destroy the soul of the revolution; its leadership, from its rural bastion, will continue catalyzing the revolutionary spirit of the masses and organizing new forces for other battles.

Second: The continental character of the struggle. Can we conceive of this new epoch in the emancipation of Latin America as the contest between two local forces struggling for power over a given territory? Obviously not. It will be a fight to the death between all the popular forces and all the repressive forces.

The Yankees will intervene because of shared interests and because the struggle in Latin America is decisive. They will intervene with all of their resources and will also turn all available destructive weapons on the popular forces. They will not allow revolutionary power to consolidate itself, and if it succeeds in doing so, they will attack it again and again. They will not recognize defeat and will try to divide the revolutionary forces, introducing saboteurs of every kind. They will try to destroy the new state economically; in a word, they will try to annihilate it.

Given this overall panorama of Latin America, we find it difficult to believe that victory can be achieved in one isolated country. The union of repressive forces must be countered with the unity of the popular forces. In every country where oppression reaches the limits of tolerance, the banner of rebellion must be raised, and this banner will, of historical necessity, be continental in character. The Andean cordillera is destined to be the Sierra Maestra of the Americas, as Fidel has said, and all the immense territories of this continent are destined to be the scene of a struggle to death against imperialist power.

We cannot say when the struggle will take on these continental characteristics or how long it will last, but we can predict its coming, for it

is the product of historical, political and economic circumstances. Its advance cannot be stopped.

Faced with these continental tactics and strategy, some people offer limited formulas: minor election campaigns; an election victory here or there; two deputies, a senator, four mayors; a large popular demonstration broken up by gunfire; an election lost by fewer votes than the preceding one; one labor strike won, 10 strikes lost; one step forward, 10 steps back. And then, at any given moment, the rules of the game are changed and one has to start all over again.

Why such formulas? Why such weakening of the people's energies? There is only one reason: Among the progressive forces of some Latin American nations there exists a terrible confusion between tactical and strategic objectives. Small tactical positions have been interpreted as great strategic objectives. One must credit the reactionary forces with the success of having forced their class enemy to make minimal offensive positions their fundamental objective.

When and where these grave errors occur, the people organize their legions year after year to achieve gains which cost them immense sacrifices and do not have the least value. There are, for example, parliaments, legal strikes, salary increases, bourgeois constitutions, the liberation of a popular figure... and worst of all, in order to gain these positions one must enter into the political games of the bourgeois state. In order to get permission to play this dangerous game one must show that one is a good child, that one is not dangerous, that one would never think of assaulting army garrisons or trains, destroying bridges, or bringing revolutionary justice to hired thugs or torturers, or going to the mountains. One cannot state resolutely the only and violent affirmation of Latin America: the final struggle for her redemption.

Latin America offers a contradictory picture. There are progressive forces which are not up to the level of those they lead—the masses, who can rise to unknown heights and who boil with a desire to act, and leaders who frustrate those desires. The catastrophe is almost upon us and the people have no fear; they try to move toward the moment of sacrifice, which will mean the definitive achievement of redemption. The educated and prudent ones, on the other hand, put all available brakes on the movement of the masses, attempting to divert the irrepressible yearnings of

the masses for the great strategic objectives: the taking of political power, the annihilation of the army and the destruction of the system of exploitation of human beings by others. The picture is contradictory but full of hope because the masses know that “the role of Job is not for the revolutionary,” so they prepare for battle.

Will imperialism continue to lose one position after another or will it, in its bestiality and as it threatened not long ago, launch a nuclear attack and engulf the entire world in a nuclear holocaust? We cannot say. We do assert, however, that we must follow the road of liberation even though it may cost millions of nuclear war victims. In the struggle to death between two systems we cannot think of anything but the final victory of socialism or its relapse as a consequence of the nuclear victory of imperialist aggression.

Cuba is on the brink of an invasion, threatened by the most powerful imperialist forces of the world, and as such, threatened with nuclear annihilation. From its trench, refusing to retreat, Cuba issues a call to arms to all of Latin America. This is a struggle that will not be decided in a few minutes or an hour of terrible battle. The end of the struggle will take years of bitter encounters causing atrocious suffering. The attack of the allied imperialist and bourgeois forces will time and again force the popular movements to the brink of destruction, but those movements will always come back strengthened by the support of the people until total liberation is achieved.

From here, from its lonely vanguard trench, our people make their voices heard. This is not the song of a revolution heading for defeat; it is a revolutionary anthem destined to be sung eternally from the lips of Latin American fighters. It will be echoed by history.

El Patojo

Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle, known as “El Patojo” because he was very short in stature, was a Guatemalan who left Guatemala with Che and went with him to Mexico. Cáceres moved to Cuba after the triumph of the Cuban revolution and lived there until he joined the struggle to liberate his own country, a struggle in which he was killed in combat. This portrait of his friend was first published in *Verde Olivo* magazine on August 19, 1962, and later included in Che’s *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War.*[2]

A few days ago a cable brought the news of the death of some Guatemalan patriots, among them Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle.

In this difficult profession of a revolutionary, in the midst of class wars that are convulsing the entire continent, death is a frequent accident. But the death of a friend, a compañero during difficult hours and someone who had shared dreams of better times, is always painful for the person who receives the news, and Julio Roberto was a great friend. He was short and frail; for that reason we called him *El Patojo,* Guatemalan slang meaning “Shorty” or “Kid.”

El Patojo had witnessed the birth of our revolution while in Mexico and had volunteered to join us. Fidel, however, did not want to bring any more foreigners into that struggle for national liberation in which I had the honor to participate.

A few days after the revolution triumphed, El Patojo sold his few belongings and, with only a small suitcase, turned up in Cuba. He worked in various branches of public administration, and he was the first head of personnel of the Department of Industrialization of INRA [National Institute of Agrarian Reform]. But he was never happy with his work. El Patojo was looking for something different; he was seeking the liberation of his own country. The revolution had changed him profoundly, as it had all of us. The bewildered young man who had left Guatemala without fully understanding the defeat had now become the fully conscious revolutionary.

The first time we met we were on a train, fleeing Guatemala, a couple of months after the [1954] fall of Árbenz. We were going to Tapachula, from where we could reach Mexico City. El Patojo was several years younger than I, but we immediately formed a lasting friendship. Together we made the trip from Chiapas to Mexico City; together we faced the same problems—we were both penniless, defeated and forced to earn a living in an indifferent if not hostile environment. El Patojo had no money and I only a few pesos; I bought a camera and, together, we undertook the illegal job of taking pictures of people in the city parks. Our partner was a Mexican who had a small darkroom where we developed the film. We got to know all of Mexico City, walking from one end to another, delivering the atrocious photographs we had taken. We battled with all kinds of clients, trying to convince them that the little boy in the photo was really very cute and it was really a great bargain to pay a Mexican peso for such a marvel.

This is how we ate for several months. Little by little the contingencies of revolutionary life separated us. I have already said that Fidel did not want to bring him to Cuba, not because of any shortcomings he might have had, but to avoid turning our army into a mosaic of nationalities.

El Patojo had been a journalist, had studied physics at the University of Mexico, had left his studies and then returned to them, without ever getting very far. He earned his living in various places, at various jobs, and never asked for anything. I still do not know whether that sensitive and serious boy was overly timid, or too proud to recognize his weaknesses and his personal problems to approach a friend for help. El Patojo was an introvert, highly intelligent, broadly cultured, sensitive. He matured steadily and in his last moments was ready to put his great sensibilities at the service of his people. He belonged to the Guatemalan Workers [communist] Party and had disciplined himself in that life—he was developing into a fine revolutionary cadre. By then, little remained of his earlier hypersensitivity. Revolution purifies people, improves and develops them, just as experienced farmers correct the deficiencies of their crops and strengthen their good qualities.

After he came to Cuba we almost always lived in the same house, as was fitting for two old friends. But we no longer maintained our earlier intimacy in this new life, and I only suspected El Patojo's plans when I sometimes saw him earnestly studying one of the native Indian languages of his country. One day he told me he was leaving, that the time had come for him to do his duty.

El Patojo had had no military training; he simply felt that duty called him. He was going to his country to fight, gun in hand, to somehow reproduce our guerrilla struggle. It was then that we had one of our few long talks. I limited myself to recommending strongly these three things: constant movement, constant wariness and eternal vigilance. Movement—never stay put; never spend two nights in the same place; never stop moving from one place to another. Wariness—at the beginning, be wary even of your own shadow, friendly peasants, informants, guides, contacts; mistrust everything until you hold a liberated zone. Vigilance—constant guard duty; constant reconnaissance; establishment of a camp in a safe place and, above all, never sleep beneath a roof, never sleep in a house where you can be surrounded. This was the synthesis of our guerrilla experience; it was the

only thing—along with a warm handshake—that I could give to my friend. Could I advise him not to do it? By what right? We had undertaken something at a time when it was believed impossible, and now he saw that it had succeeded.

El Patojo left and in time came the news of his death. At first we hoped there had been a confusion of names, that there had been some mistake, but unfortunately his body had been identified by his own mother; there could be no doubt he was dead. And not only he, but a group of compañeros with him, all of them as brave, as selfless, as intelligent perhaps as he, but not known to us personally.

Once more there is the bitter taste of defeat and the unanswered question: Why did he not learn from the experience of others? Why did those men not heed more carefully the simple advice that we had given them? There is an urgent investigation into how it came about, how El Patojo died. We still do not know exactly what happened, but we do know that the region was poorly chosen, that the men were not physically prepared, that they were not sufficiently wary and, of course, that they were not sufficiently vigilant. The repressive army took them by surprise, killed a few, dispersed the rest, then returned to pursue them, and virtually annihilated them. They took some prisoners; others, like El Patojo, died in battle. After being dispersed, the guerrillas were probably hunted down, as we had been after Alegría de Pío.

Once again youthful blood has fertilized the fields of the Americas to make freedom possible. Another battle has been lost; we must make time to weep for our fallen compañeros while we sharpen our machetes. From the valuable and tragic experience of the cherished dead, we must firmly resolve not to repeat their errors, to avenge the death of each one of them with many victories, and to achieve definitive liberation.

When El Patojo left Cuba, he left nothing behind, nor did he leave any messages; he had few clothes or personal belongings to worry about. Old mutual friends in Mexico, however, brought me some poems he had written and left there in a notebook. They are the last verses of a revolutionary; they are, in addition, a love song to the revolution, to the homeland and to a woman. To that woman whom El Patojo knew and loved in Cuba are addressed these final verses, this injunction:

Take this, it is only my heart
Hold it in your hand
And when the dawn arrives,
Open your hand
And let the sun warm it…

El Patojo's heart has remained among us, in the hands of his beloved and in the loving hands of an entire people, waiting to be warmed beneath the sun of a new day that will surely dawn for Guatemala and for all the Americas. Today, in the Ministry of Industry where he left many friends, there is a small school of statistics named "Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle" in his memory. Later, when Guatemala is free, his beloved name will surely be given to a school, a factory, a hospital, to any place where people fight and work to build a new society.

---

1. The Second Declaration of Havana was read by Fidel Castro to a mass rally in Revolution Plaza on February 4, 1962, in response to Cuba's expulsion from the OAS.
2. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press), 2006.

Speeches (1962)

This speech was given on May 18, 1962, to the members of the Cuban Department of State Security [DSE]. It was not published until after Che Guevara's death, but contains some of the ideas Che developed in his famous 1966 "Message to the Tricontinental."

The Cuban Revolution's Influence in Latin America

First of all, I would like to apologize, because I had intended to prepare some data and figures that would clearly express some analyses on Latin America in general, its relations with imperialism and the relations Latin America will have with the Cuban revolutionary government. However, as always in these cases, my good intentions have remained nothing more than intentions, and I will have to speak from memory, so I will talk in general terms and not quote any figures.

I won't recount at length the history of the process of imperialism's penetration in Latin America, but it is useful to know that the part of the Americas called Latin America has nearly always lived under the yoke of the big imperialist monopolies. Spain dominated a large part of the Americas and other European countries penetrated this area later on, just after the birth of capitalism, in the stage of capitalist expansion. Britain and France were among the countries that acquired colonies here.

After the wars of independence, several countries fought over Latin America, and, with the birth of economic imperialism at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, the United States quickly came to dominate all of North, South and Central America. Other imperialist powers still persisted in the southern part of the Americas; Britain had a strong position in the extreme south, in Argentina and Uruguay, until the end of the last war.

At times, our countries have been the scenes of wars caused by monopolies of different nationalities fighting over spheres of influence. The Chaco War is one of the examples of the struggle for oil waged between Shell (owned by English and German groups) and Standard Oil. It was a very bloody war lasting four years, in which Bolivia and Paraguay lost the best of their young men in the Chaco jungle.

There are other examples of this kind: the action in which Peru, representing Standard Oil, grabbed a part of Ecuador's territory, where Shell was influential. Wars have also been waged for other kinds of products. The United Fruit Company has caused wars in Central America in order to control banana-growing territories. Wars have also been waged in the south, between Chile, Bolivia and Peru, over possession of nitrate deposits—which were very important before a method of creating synthetic nitrate was discovered. At best, we have been unwitting actors in a struggle between empires.

After the war, however, the last redoubts of British imperialism—German imperialism had already been ousted—ceded to US imperialism. The fact that the economic domination of the Americas has since been completely unified has brought about a trend toward unity among the forces that are struggling against imperialism. We must be ever more closely united in the struggle, because it is a struggle all of us share. It is expressed now, for example, in the peoples' solidarity with Cuba. Everyone is quickly learning that there is only one enemy, which is imperialism, and that here in Latin America it bears the name of US imperialism.

Imperialism's penetration has varied greatly depending on historical, political and economic circumstances — and also, perhaps, reflecting how far our countries are from the imperialist capital. Some countries, such as Panama, are completely colonized and this determines their way of life. Other countries retain more of their national characteristics and are still in a stage of cultural struggle against imperialism. All, however, have the common denominator of imperialism's control over their great reserves of materials for use in its industries. Such reserves are strategic not only for war but for its many other industries, its control of banking and its near monopoly on foreign trade.

We are very interested in Latin America for several reasons: because we are a part of it culturally and historically; because we belong to a group that

is fighting for its freedom; and because Latin America's attitude is closely related to our future and to our revolution's future and its desire to spread its ideology. Revolutions have this characteristic, they expand ideologically. They do not remain limited to a single country but expand to other areas—or, to use an economic term, even though this is not the case—to other spheres of influence.

The Cuban revolution has had an enormous influence in Latin America, although to varying degrees in every country. We should analyze the reasons for the influence of the Cuban revolution and why this has been greater in some countries than in others. We should also analyze in detail the political life in each of the countries and the attitudes of the progressive parties in each of them—with all due respect and without interfering in the internal affairs of any party—because those attitudes are very important for analyzing the current situation.

In some countries the popular struggle has developed acutely; in other countries, the popular struggle has been slowed. In some countries, Cuba is a sacred symbol for the entire people; in others, Cuba symbolizes a liberation movement that is viewed from afar. The origins are complex, but always related to each struggle's approach on how to seize power, and they are greatly influenced by solutions that have been found for this problem. In some cases, they are also related to the greater or lesser predominance of the working class and its influence; in others, they are related to their proximity to our revolution.

We can analyze these countries in groups.

Two countries in South America are very important in terms of their ideological influence. One of them is Argentina, which is one of the relatively strong powers in Latin America. In the extreme south, Uruguay presents very similar characteristics. Both are cattle-raising countries and have very powerful oligarchies that control foreign trade on the basis of their ownership of large landholdings and cattle—although they have now to share these with the United States.

They are countries with a very concentrated urban population. In Uruguay's case, we cannot say that the working class is prevalent, because Uruguay is a country with very little development. In Argentina, the working class prevails, but it is in a very difficult situation, because it is employed only in processing industries and is dependent on raw materials

from abroad. The country does not yet have a solid industrial base. It has one enormous city, Buenos Aires, where close to 30 percent of the total population lives, and has close to 3 million square kilometers of habitable land, not counting the territory in Antarctica that is under dispute and is of no demographic value.

This immense country has a population of over six million people in its capital in an area a little larger than Havana. It has vast expanses of uncultivated land where the farming class has a relatively large amount of land. It also has a small group of agricultural workers wandering from one place to another following the crops, much as the cane cutters used to do here, however the cane cutters could pick coffee or harvest tobacco and alternate this with other seasonal crops.

In Argentina and Uruguay, which have these characteristics, and in Chile, where the working class is the majority, the philosophy of civil wars against despotic powers has been rejected and the taking of power in the future by means of elections or in some other peaceful way has been proposed more or less directly and explicitly.

Just about everyone knows of the latest events in Argentina, where some relatively leftist groups came to possess more or less real power. These groups represent the progressive sector of the Argentine working class but are distorting many of the people’s aspirations through a clique of the Peronist party that is completely out of touch with the people. And when elections were proposed, the *gorillas* — as the ultra-reactionary groups in the Argentine army are called—intervened and put an end to that situation.

Something similar happened in Uruguay, though there the army there has no real clout. Nardone (the ultra-reactionary now in power) carried out a kind of coup. The situation created by repeated rightist coups, combined with the philosophy of taking power by means of elections and popular fronts, creates a certain apathy toward the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban revolution embodies an experience that Cuba does not want to be unique in Latin America. It reflects a way to take power. Naturally, it is not a form that appeals to the masses of people who are under great pressure, oppressed by domestic oppressive groups and by imperialism. Some theoretical explanations concerning the Cuban revolution are in order, and these will affect the attitude of those people toward the revolution.

In countries where groups have openly proclaimed their determination to seize power by armed struggle there is more understanding. This position is of course very difficult and very controversial to adopt, and we don't have to participate directly in it. Every country and every party in its own country should seek the formulas of struggle recommended by its own historical experience. Yet the Cuban revolution is a fact, and one of continental scope. Cuban reality has at least some ongoing influence in the lives of the Latin American countries.

Those known as ultra-leftists—or sometimes, provocateurs—try to implant the Cuban experience without thinking particularly about whether or not this would be the right place to do so. Such people, who exist everywhere, simply take an experience that has occurred in Latin America and attempt to transfer it to each of the other countries. This causes more friction among the leftist groups. The history of the defense of Cuba in those countries by each of the political organizations is also a history of division. It is important to say this here so you will understand something of those problems, including their history of pettiness and their struggles to achieve small advances in controlling organizations.

Without intending to, Cuba has therefore been viewed as being mixed up in those polemics. I say "without intending to": this experience has been enough for us; we will never aspire to lead the politics or the method of carrying out a revolution, achieving power, in any other country. We are again, however, at the heart of the polemics.

In Chile, where the parties of the left have greater ascendancy, a vigorous trajectory and an ideological firmness which may well be greater than that of other parties in Latin America, the situation has been similar. The difference being that the Chilean Communist Party and the other leftist parties have themselves already posed the dilemma: to take power either through peaceful means or by the way of violence. They are all preparing for a future struggle which I think will come about, because there is no other historical experience, nor is one possible here in Latin America in the present conditions of the conflict developing between the superpowers. The exacerbation of the struggle between imperialism and the peace camp proves that imperialism will never simply hand over control. From a strategic point of view, such a thing would be ridiculous, if the imperialists still have the weapons. To gain control, the left must be very powerful and

must force the reactionaries to capitulate. Those conditions don't as yet exist in Chile. This is the part of South America where, for the people of the region, the Cuban revolution presents different characteristics.

Moving north we come to the countries where the Cuban revolution is really a beacon for the peoples. We can leave Bolivia aside, because some years ago it had a very timid bourgeois revolution that was severely weakened by concessions it had to make regarding its economy, which is single-crop and completely tied to the imperialist economy. Its bourgeoisie has had to be maintained in part by imperialism. Imperialism, of course, takes its wealth with one hand and using a quarter of the wealth it takes out it then props up the government with the other. This has created a situation of dependence and, in spite of the Bolivian government's efforts to throw off the imperialist yoke—many of these efforts have been obviously sincere—it has not managed to do so. Bolivia does maintain a correct attitude on some matters regarding Cuba and they remain as friendly as possible in international conferences. It has carried out agrarian reform, although in a very truncated form: the church's possessions have not been seized; the cooperatives created have no real development; and, importantly, are cooperatives of a traditional kind, based on earlier regional experiences of primitive communism. Such cooperatives, worked by Indians, have been maintained through tradition and operate now as they have always done. The struggle is not manifested very strongly in Bolivia. The terms are changing a little; it is not a case of direct struggle by the oppressed masses of peasants and workers against imperialism, but one of struggle against a national bourgeoisie, which has made a series of concessions, like overthrowing the feudal overlords and the domestic large landowners, so the class struggle is not so acute.

Paraguay, Bolivia's former rival in the Chaco War is, however, nearby. There are now guerrillas in Paraguay. It is a very poor country. It has around one-and-a-half million inhabitants in a territory that is much larger than Cuba's, with extensive jungles. It has some agricultural products and very few cattle. It has terrible endemic diseases, such as leprosy, which has spread extensively, and there is practically no health care.

Almost the entire population lives in three or four relatively large cities. There have been several guerrilla experiences in the forests. The most important and most serious of these from an ideological point of view have

been directed by a people's revolutionary front with the participation of the Paraguayan Communist Party. Its guerrillas have been systematically defeated. I think that tactical mistakes have been made in the conduct of the revolutionary struggle—which has some laws that must not be broken—but, even so, uprisings continue. Some rebel groups are living in the forests and they know that if they turn themselves in they will be killed. They are far from the borders.

Paraguay is an ideal country for guerrilla warfare. It is agriculturally very rich and has wonderful natural conditions. There are no high mountains but there are forests, very large rivers and operational zones where it would be very difficult for regular armies and very easy to wage a struggle with the help of the farming population.

It has a dictatorship of the extreme right, which used to be very influenced by the Argentine oligarchy. Paraguay was a semicolony of Argentina but with the latest penetrations of US capital has now become directly dependent on the United States. It maintains a bestial dictatorship and has all of the seeds of an intensive short-term popular struggle.

A little farther to the north is Peru. Peru should be watched closely in the future. It has very special characteristics: 80 percent of its population is indigenous or mestizo and there is very clear racial segregation. Whites own the land and the capital; the mestizos generally work as overseers for the whites, and Indians as serfs.

In Peru, farms are still sold complete with their Indian workers. Farms are advertised in the newspapers along with the number of workers or the number of Indians who are forced to work for the feudal lord. You cannot even imagine how terrible the situation is unless you have been there.

Peru is the only country in Latin America with vast agricultural regions where the leftist parties have decisive influence and control. Peru and the indigenous region of Cuzco, where the Peruvian Communist Party has a strong influence, are the only areas in the Americas where any Marxist party has a strong influence. Some years ago the Peruvian Communist Party seized the city of Cuzco by force of arms, but revolutionary conditions didn't exist and there was a kind of tacit truce: the rebels returned the city and the oppressors, the government troops, took no reprisals. A tense situation ensued, and today Cuzco remains one of the areas where a

revolution is threatening—or, rather, where there are hopes of a revolution in Latin America.

Peru is in a similar situation, extreme poverty and extreme oppression, the fundamental characteristics of the heavily populated Andes and important factors for carrying out a revolution. The people don't speak Spanish; the most commonly spoken languages are Quechua and Aymara, closely related to each other. Anybody wanting to communicate with the Indians has to speak those languages; if they don't, communication will be impossible.

Nationalities aren't defined by the borders of those countries. Aymaras in Bolivia relate better with Aymaras in Peru than with whites in either Bolivia or Peru. First the colonizers and then the imperialists have taken pains to maintain that situation. There is, therefore, a natural affinity between those two countries, and in Peru and Ecuador and even as far as Colombia, between the areas where the Andeans and Quechuas live. In all of those countries the prevailing languages are dialects.

These countries have great geographical differences. Peru has three mountain chains crossed by valleys, and the eastern half of the country leads into the great Amazon River basin, which is where *la montaña* begins —an area of medium to high mountain ranges with a subtropical climate, similar to the climate in our mountains, but with more difficult natural conditions.

The little-developed bourgeoisie in Peru lives on the coast, a narrow, desert-like strip that runs parallel to very high mountains. The highest peak in Peru's western mountain range is just 100 kilometers from the coast and 5,000 meters above sea level. It sits there like a shell washed ashore. A month or two ago there were uprisings you probably heard about, in the mining area in the middle of the country. Mining is very developed in Peru and you know that mine workers in general are very combative. They don't necessarily have great political awareness because of the conditions in the country, but they are very combative. The Peruvian army consists of a caste of officers at the top, all from the same class, and masses of Indians at the bottom; if a serious uprising were to occur, there would be no way to crush it.

Ecuador has the same conditions with just one difference: the Ecuadoran bourgeoisie—or a part of it—and, in general, all the supporters

of the left have much more influence in the cities and are much clearer about the need for an uprising. Several leaders of these Ecuadoran leftist groups have been in Cuba and have been considerably influenced by the effects and results of the Cuban revolution. They openly uphold the banner of an immediate agrarian revolution. There is also a strong repressive army and the United States has stationed some of its troops in Ecuador. I think that Ecuador, too, is a country where intensive revolutionary struggle will soon appear.

Continuing up the Andes, the backbone of the continent, we come to Colombia where, with periods of greater or lesser activity, a war has been going on for the past 12 years. The Colombian guerrillas have made mistakes that have kept them from achieving a people's victory such as ours. There has been a lack of ideological leadership. The guerrillas are dispersed and lack a central command (which we in Cuba had), they have been under the personal leadership of caudillos from rural areas, and they began to rob and kill just like their rivals in order to survive. Naturally, they gradually fell into banditry. Other guerrilla groups adopted a position of self-defense and did nothing other than defend themselves when attacked by the government. The situation of struggle and of war to the death led these guerrillas to be weakened. Some of them were completely wiped out.

Right now, influenced by the Cuban revolution, the guerrilla movement in Colombia has grown stronger.

One group of young people, the MOEC [Worker, Student, Peasant Movement], did something similar to what the July 26 Movement did here in the beginning of its struggle. They espouse a series of rightist tendencies toward anarchy—that are sometimes mixed with anticommunist ideas—but they reflect the seeds of a determination to fight. Some of their leaders have been in Cuba. The most determined and enthusiastic of them was compañero Larrota, who was with us during the April [1961 Bay of Pigs] invasion and some time before that. He was murdered when he returned to Colombia. MOEC is probably not important as a political movement and in some cases even could be dangerous, but the group is an example of what is happening there.

Clearly the Colombian parties of the left are trying to hold back the insurrectional movement and move toward electoral struggle, in an absurd context where there are only two legal parties, each taking turns at power.

In such absurd conditions, the more impetuous Colombian revolutionaries consider that resorting to elections simply wastes time, and in spite of all obstacles they are doing everything they can to further a struggle that is no longer latent but has developed into open fighting in several parts of the country.

It is difficult to say whether the struggle in Colombia may or may not be important. It is not directed by a well-structured leftist movement; it consists of efforts by a range of social groups and elements from different classes all trying to do something, but there is no ideological leadership and that is very dangerous. There is no way to know where it's going, but the conditions are being created for the future development of a well-structured revolutionary struggle in Colombia.

The situation in Venezuela is much more active. The Communist Party and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) are heading an armed movement of liberation, and civil war has practically broken out in Venezuela. We should be very interested in this Venezuelan movement; we should be watching it carefully and with great affinity.

Some tactical disagreements have arisen over how to wage that struggle. As a result of our own experience, in which our nation was born from a unilateral experience, we favor guerrilla warfare based on peasants' groups and seizing the cities from the countryside. This is based on our masses' great hunger for land and on the mercenary armies' extreme weakness when moving through large territories in Latin America. Imperialism's attacks can't be effective in areas that are favorable for the guerrillas and the popular forces. The government is unable to move beyond areas where the population is concentrated.

Some Venezuelan compañeros have said several times that something violent may happen in Venezuela, that special conditions exist, with some military groups ready to support an insurrection. Partial results were seen in the last insurrectional attempt made at Carúpano, showing once again that, in a revolution, Latin America's professional military men serve only as a source of weapons for the people. The only mission an army group can have is to let itself be disarmed. From then on, it should be left alone; at most, isolated individuals should be taken from it.

I don't know that specific area very well, but I am familiar with neighboring areas and in that region impenetrable forests and mountains are

nearby. There, a guerrilla unit can create an extremely difficult situation. The area is near oil-exporting ports, such as Caripito, and a guerrilla unit can threaten one of the key areas of the imperialist economy in Venezuela. The marines, however, didn't set foot outside their garrison. The marines who rebelled couldn't go anywhere in the interior of the country. They surrendered as soon as they saw that the loyal troops outnumbered them.

A revolution cannot be carried out in those conditions. As you know, guerrilla struggle is long and drawn-out; battles follow one another very slowly and the greatest difficulties aren't direct action by the enemy but rather struggle against the rigors of the climate; lack of provisions and medicine; the struggle to awaken the rural masses ideologically; the political struggle to incorporate those masses in the popular movement; the slowness of the revolution's advance; and certainly, in the case of Venezuela, US intervention to defend its oil possessions. All these things influence the guerrilla struggle.

This time—although this time only, it can't be said any other way—the path adopted in Venezuela was to try to deliver a violent blow via some of the units of the army. Even if they had triumphed, it would only have been a victory of one part of the army over the other. What would the army then have done? It's very simple: they would have pardoned the losing faction, maintained their caste status and allowed them to retain all of their caste privileges and their class's control in the country. The exploiting class has the weapons that maintain that army of exploitation.

When one part of the army has triumphed over the other—say, the constitutional section over the anti-constitutional section—it is nothing more than a tiny distortion or a small clash within the group of exploiters. This is a contradiction that in present-day Latin America will never be decisive, with imperialism maintaining its tools of exploitation.

One of the premises of the Cuban revolution is that it is absolutely necessary to immediately destroy the army in order to take power seriously.

Brazil is another big country in South America that is in a strange situation of unstable equilibrium. As you know, Brazil is the largest country in Latin America, the third largest in the world and the country with the largest reserves of raw materials owned by US interests. It has 60 million inhabitants and is a real power. All its raw materials are being developed by US capital, and all the contradictions of Latin America have appeared there.

Two trends can be noted in the forces of the left: some of them want a revolution, while others want to take power by more peaceful or institutional means. The forces of the left that are represented, above all, by the peasant masses of the northeast are clearly willing to seize power despite the opposition of the bourgeoisie (the bourgeoisie puts up little opposition; imperialism is the real enemy).

Brazil is really several different countries. The northeast region is one of them. It is a very poor, densely populated area where there are terrible droughts and the very large peasantry is particularly combative. In the center of the country there is a largely unpopulated jungle area with small agricultural plots. To the south is the industrial area with São Paulo and Río de Janeiro, the most important cities in Brazil.

The northern area is ideal for insurrection. Exploitation has reached such an extreme that peasants cannot stand it anymore. Every day there are reports that Brazilian compañeros have been killed in their struggle against the large landowners. After Quadros resigned and the military tried to stage a coup, the country reached a compromise: the present government is in power thanks to a compromise between the exploiting groups, the Brazilian national bourgeoisie and imperialism. This compromise will, of course, be violated and the two will start fighting among themselves. If they haven't yet done so openly, it is because they face one great enemy, the Brazilian people.

When Quadros resigned, Fidel explained more or less what the Brazilian people should do. His words were broadcast to the Brazilian people and caused a lot of disquiet. Some thought it to be an act of interference by our government and prime minister in Brazil's internal affairs. I believe that revolutionaries should give such advice in times of great danger and great need for decisiveness. If a decisive battle had been won in Brazil, the panorama of Latin America would have changed rapidly. Brazil shares borders with all the other South American countries except Chile and Ecuador. It has enormous influence. It is really a place for waging a battle.

In our relations with the other Latin American countries, we should always consider that we are part of a single family—a family with more or less special characteristics—and we must not forget our duty of solidarity or our duty to express our opinion at specific moments. It is not a matter of

always interfering or of tediously pointing to our own example—an example not all other countries can follow. But at moments like that, when Brazilians were debating the future of a large part of Latin America, we should speak out.

Part of the Brazilian battle was lost—and could be lost—without too many consequences, but it was nevertheless a moment of tremendous tension. If the battle had been won, we would have won a great deal. What happened in Brazil was not a triumph of the popular forces; it was simply a compromise, in which the group that has power, weapons, decisiveness to use them and great clarity about what has to be done gave up some of the privileges it had won. It will try to regain them later on, and then there will be a clash, too.

This year has already been one of violent clashes between the popular forces and those of oppression. The coming years will be similar. It cannot be said exactly when a collision will occur between such forces in each Latin American country, but it is clear that the contradictions are more and more exacerbated, and this is creating subjective conditions so important for developing a revolution. Two such conditions are particularly important: awareness of the need to effect urgent social change in order to do away with the situation of injustice and the certainty that it is possible to bring about that change.

All Latin Americans are training to bring change about. Training takes the form of uprisings and daily struggle, at times through legal means and at other times through illegal ones; at times in overt struggle and at other times underground. In all cases, the people are training constantly in all possible ways and that training is maturing in terms of quality and intensity, which presages very great future battles in Latin America.

Central America is like one country sharing the same characteristics overlaid with massive imperialist domination. It is one of the places where the popular struggle has already reached a climax but where the actual results are hard to see. In the short term I do not think they are very encouraging, because of the extensive domination of the United States. In Guatemala there has been a relative failure by the progressive forces, and Mexico is fast becoming a US colony. There is a type of bourgeoisie in Mexico, but it has made a pact with imperialism. It is a difficult country that

has been greatly harmed by the so-called Mexican revolution, and no important actions against its government can be foreseen there.

I have concentrated my attention on the countries that have entered into the sharpest contradictions with us and in which special conditions have been created for struggle. We have responded to the aggression through our mass media and explained as far as possible to the masses, telling them what can be done, and we are waiting. We aren't waiting as if we were in an orchestra pit preparing to watch the fight; we aren't spectators but rather are a part—an important part—of the struggle. The future of the peoples' revolutions in Latin America is very closely linked to the development of our revolution.

We have friends that are more powerful than all the forces in Latin America. The United States knows this; if it attacks us directly it will seriously endanger its own territory. Even so, it has chosen and meticulously followed a policy of isolating us in the Americas. First, it has ensured that our economic ties with the other Latin American countries are weak, except for Chile. Second, it has seen to it that our relations with most of the other Latin American countries have been broken, and it continues to work on this. It appears that the United States will engage in more acts of aggression, like the seemingly imminent one in Jamaica, to keep us from competing—that is, to do away with the influence of the Cuban revolution, to break our contact with others. This is what Jesuits do, putting on long cassocks to hide their desires. The United States is trying to do this with us, cloaking us so nobody will see us and we won't have any pernicious influence.

It is very important to struggle against this, because our contact with the rest of Latin America also depends on the way in which the Latin American peoples react to imperialism's attacks, and our safety depends to a great extent on how they react.

We shouldn't forget that imperialism makes mistakes. Imperialism may or may not know what the Soviet Union is willing to do to defend us, although I think it does know—if it didn't, we would have been attacked already. But it may be mistaken, and this time we must not let imperialism be mistaken. If it is, imperialism will be totally destroyed, but very little will be left of us. We must be fighters for peace and convinced champions

of peace, because we ourselves will be hurt if the peace is broken. At the same time, we must talk freely of peoples' revolutions.

Although it seems paradoxical, advocating revolutions and peoples' struggle is the way to defend peace. Imperialism cannot fight against people when they are armed; it has to come to some kind of a compromise. Moreover, it is not profitable for it to test its implements of war against something that does not exist, so it tries to foment wars between other nations. Imperialism wins in the local wars, the wars between nations. In them, its war materiel wins; the countries go into debt, and imperialism sells weapons to one or to both of the countries. In short, everything depends on the circumstances, but imperialism will gain from testing its war machinery, its tactics and its new inventions.

Now, a people's war has armies that appear and disappear in the early stages and fronts of struggle that don't exist—a war such as that in the southern part of Indochina, where a death zone has been declared 40 kilometers from Saigon; that is, the guerrillas hold territory just 40 kilometers from the capital. The imperialists can't maintain this kind of war, and moreover it teaches them nothing. They want to fight with their weapons to defend their privileges; they can't learn anything from fighting against small units in places where there is no visible enemy. They would have to make war against the Soviet Union, fighting with nuclear missiles and using another, totally different kind of strategy.

Even though it is not really drained—its losses are small—imperialism is losing points of support. We should remember one important thing: the US imperialists are quite foresighted; they aren't as stupid as they seem. They make mistakes, true, but they aren't as stupid as they seem. Some years ago they realized their own raw material reserves were decreasing. The United States is a very wealthy country, but its reserves were on the decline, and so it began to seek reserves elsewhere, all over the world.

There are tin deposits close to Indochina and in Malaya. Bolivia also has tin. Peru has deposits of several precious metals, including iron and copper, and there are also large deposits of copper in Chile. Among other things, Argentina has uranium, and I believe the imperialists are taking that, too. Mexico has sulfur. Venezuela has oil, which the imperialist machine needs in order to survive. The United States needs Latin America, in addition to the parts of Asia and Africa it controls to keep itself going.

Why did it fight in the Congo? The Congo has uranium, copper, diamonds—a whole realm of natural riches. The United States fought hard in the Congo; it ousted Belgian imperialism and took over. The United States is applying this policy all over the world, preparing for the future. If we take away its access to resources, take away imperialism's economic base, we will mortally wound it. You have to remember that imperialism functions outside its own territory. The United States is not a power operating only within its own territory. It has invested capital all over the world and it plays with it, investing and then withdrawing its investments. Weakening imperialism's economic base will help to break its strength and will contribute to peace—world, global peace—which is what interests us.

We have to try to ensure that imperialism is not mistaken. We have so far warned it of the steps we would take to counter its blows—and we have taken them, which has hurt it. We have warned the imperialists several times. The radio station here in Havana hurts them. The truth hurts them, and that radio broadcasts to all of Latin America. Peasants throughout Latin America listen to the radio; cinema is the only media more influential than radio there. We have taught imperialism about our modest strength, and we must encourage their belief in our strength.

The imperialists are trying to isolate us, but also to attack us, through acts of sabotage like those in recent days and by trying to influence the people so as to create a certain climate. What happened in Hungary [in 1956] is an interesting example of mistakes made by a people's government, and there a counterrevolution paid for and prepared by the US government was unleashed.

Here in Latin America there was a very similar example, though the relevant government had different characteristics from the Hungarian people's government. It happened in Bolivia. In Bolivia there was a bourgeois government, headed by Major Villarroel, that opposed the United States. It advocated nationalizing the mines and other measures that the Bolivian people wanted. That people's government ended in a terrible way: Major Villarroel was hanged from a street lamp in the public square. Why did that happen? Because the US specialists manipulated the weaknesses arising in his government, and all governments have weaknesses, no matter how progressive they are.

We've had our weaknesses for some time, and all of you are in part responsible for them, in a very small way, of course; the leaders of the government, who are obliged to be far-sighted, are much more to blame. We took the road of sectarianism—which, more than simply being sectarian, is just plain stupid. We took the road of separation from the masses, of being too rigid, of strictly implementing correct measures and also absurd ones. We took the road of suppressing criticism, and not only the people's criticism, those who have a legitimate right to criticize, but also suppressing vigilant criticism by part of the party apparatus, which turned into an executive office and, as such, lost its characteristics of vigilance and inspection. That led us to making serious economic mistakes. Remember that economics lies at the base of all political movements, and we made economic mistakes. That is, we took the road imperialism wanted us to take; they want to destroy our economic base by means of the blockade, and we have been assisting them with our own actions.

Why do I say that you're partly responsible? The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), institutions created for the people's vigilance and to represent the people's wish to defend their revolution, were instead imposed on the people as all-purpose dens of opportunism that aroused the hostility of the people. I do think I'm entitled to describe the CDRs this way. Some of them took arbitrary measures, though this didn't happen so much here in Havana.

The fact is, we have totally ignored and abandoned the countryside, which is our base, the origin and, for two years, the source of replenishment for our guerrilla army, which triumphed over the cities—and we have left it in the hands of the CDRs.

The CDRs are filled with extremists, opportunists of all kinds who never stopped to think about the damage they were causing to the revolution. Imperialism began to work on these weaknesses—always present in the struggle—and as they worked they became quite successful. In some regions, it created real antagonism between the revolution and sectors of the petit bourgeoisie, who were overwhelmed by revolutionary activities. This is a lesson from which we should learn, and it also constitutes a great truth: that no matter what form they take, security bodies must be controlled by the people.

Sometimes it may seem, and at times it is, absolutely necessary to take prompt (and seemingly arbitrary) measures to counter the danger we are in. Half measures cannot be taken in moments of excessive tension; many people have been arrested without absolute proof that they were guilty. In the Sierra Maestra we shot some people without knowing if they bore full guilt, but it was a time when the revolution could not stop to fully investigate; it had the sacred obligation to win.

As soon as it is possible to restore natural relations among people, we should reestablish those relations, and not continue with the relations of the strong and the weak, based on the precept of "Do what I say." It is not fair not to do otherwise, and most importantly, we must do it because failure to do so would be politically unwise. Just as the CDRs have become antipathetic organizations, or at least have lost a large part of the prestige and affection they used to command, the security bodies might follow suit; in fact, they have already made similar mistakes.

Our great virtue is that we have never engaged in torture or other similarly terrible behavior that some peoples have fallen into in many other countries in the course of defending correct principles. We established a principle energetically defended by Fidel: that no prisoner, even if they are to face execution, must be touched in any way. There may have been exceptions and I personally know of one, but we continue to uphold and defend that principle. This is extremely important: anything and everything that happens makes the news, including things we don't publish in the [Cuban] newspapers and things we'd rather not know about. We hear about them later on. When I get home my compañera says, "So-and-so took asylum in an embassy," or "A soldier shot up a bus." Everything becomes known. Everybody would find out about abuses and other bad things if there were any, no matter how secretly and far from the public eye they were carried out. The people know and evaluate all such things.

You have a very important role in the defense of the country, but it is less important than the development of the economy. Remember this: your role is less important. For us, it is much more important to have *malanga* [a root vegetable] than to have you. Even so you have an important role and must carry it out well.

Very hard battles lasting for who knows how long still lie ahead of us, and we must be ready to give our lives for the revolution in one field or

another, with greater or lesser urgency, in the more or less immediate future. The battles will continue. I'm no prophet and I can't tell you what level of tension they will reach or to what degree they will consist of open combat; I hope and wish they will not reach an extreme degree. If they do, neither my actions nor yours will be very important for the final outcome. But if they don't, and none of us wants them to reach an extreme degree and will struggle to hold imperialism in its place because, as Nikita said, the elephant is strong, although the tiger is still a tiger. Your task of finding out what the enemy is planning to do, and also of passing on what the people think, takes on full importance. You can be great conduits, passing on the people's feelings to the government.

The leaders of the revolution in Matanzas went through the streets with some rope, saying that INRA (National Institute of the Agrarian Reform) would provide the rope but it was up to the people to decide who should be hanged. There were no reports—at least I haven't read one—that any such thing actually happened. Those leaders didn't do their duty correctly. That is like the example of the so-called red terror that people tried to impose against the white terror, not realizing that the white terror existed only in the minds of some extremists. We ourselves unleashed a white terror with our absurd measures, and then we introduced a red terror.

The absurd measures that an uncontrolled revolutionary group took in Matanzas were both saddening and strange. They might be repeated and we must all be vigilant to prevent that from happening. Everything that goes against revolutionary morality is counterrevolutionary—don't forget that. Anyone who fights against the revolution is a counterrevolutionary, but so is a person who uses their influence to buy a house, an extra car, food beyond their ration book quota and other things the people don't have, whether or not they flaunt them. That person is a counterrevolutionary and should be denounced immediately. Those who use their influence for their personal benefit or for that of their friends is a counterrevolutionary, and they should be relentlessly pursued and removed. Opportunism is an enemy of the revolution and flourishes wherever the people don't have control. For this reason it is very important to control the security bodies.

In bodies where control is exercised from far above—where, because of the body's work, the steps that each of its members takes cannot be controlled—we must be inflexible. Only this is justice and we have made a

revolution against injustice; moreover it is politically correct to do so, because those who violate revolutionary morality while speaking of revolution are not only potential traitors to the revolution but are also the worst detractors of the revolution. The people see them and know what they are doing, even when we ourselves don't know about such things, or don't want to know. Our revolution, having taken that mistaken path for some months, was destroying the most sacred thing it owns, the people's faith in it, and we must now work together with more enthusiasm and self-sacrifice than ever, to restore what we destroyed.

It will be a hard task; there is not the same enthusiasm this year as last; something has been lost and must be recovered. It will take a lot of effort, but it will be done, because the will to create beats in the hearts of the people and in the revolution is great. It was easier in the past. After faith has been betrayed or weakened, it won't be so easy to restore and you must work hard to do this while, at the same time, be inflexible with the counterrevolution. You must be inscrutable about state matters and remain constantly vigilant.

When making analyses you should always consider that Cuba is part of Latin America, that it is directly linked to the rest of Latin America. What we have wrought here is of great historical importance and, even if we didn't wish it, it will extend to the rest of Latin America. As it has already extended to some peoples, it will extend to others as well. The Second Declaration of Havana will be very important in the development of the revolutionary movements in Latin America. As a document it calls on the masses to struggle, and we should retain our respect for great documents. This Second Declaration of Havana is like a Latin American *Communist Manifesto* of the period, and is based on our reality and on a Marxist analysis of Latin American reality.

I thought it would be correct for me to touch on Latin America with you this evening. Please forgive me because lack of data kept me from being more convincing and from going into the economic aspect of the struggle, which is so important. It would have been very interesting—for me, at least; I don't know about you—to examine data demonstrating the extent of imperialist penetration, that brings out the relations between political movements and the economic situations of our countries and clearly shows

how reaction corresponds to imperialist penetration and how penetration takes place because of a specific historical or economic background.

The continent shares many features: imperialism's efforts to penetrate the bourgeoisie in some places in Latin America, the development of the struggles between different empires, and now the absolute US monopoly over the economies of Latin American countries and over Latin America as a whole. The brand name Colgate, for example, is a word repeated in nearly every Latin American nation, just like Mejoral, Palmolive and the names of thousands of other articles consumed here every day. Imperialism uses Latin America as a source of raw materials and as an area of expansion for its monopolies. But this has also unified us, creating a unity that must be held sacred and must be defended and strengthened.

As a moral footnote to this conversation, you should study Latin America more. I have noted that generally in Cuba we know more about practically every other part of the world than we do about Latin America, and this is wrong. By studying Latin America, we will also learn a little about ourselves, draw closer together and understand more about our relations and our history. Studying Latin America means studying imperialist penetration—that is, studying its economy. There, you will discover the seeds of everything that is growing and happening now.

Speech to the Argentines Living in Havana

In this speech Che Guevara addresses the Argentine community in Havana during the festivities held on May 25, 1962, the anniversary of Argentina's liberation from Spain.

Dear compatriots from all over Latin America and those who come from the same province in Argentina as I do and who are here today celebrating one of our patriotic dates:

This moment, which has been repeated many times in the course of our lives, has special meaning—a special tone and color—today. Here, in another Latin American country, in new conditions in Latin America, where we are celebrating another May 25, this time, with no hackneyed speeches and the customary fanfare, without the hollow words with which the rulers of the moment try to make themselves participants in our forefathers' glory.

Here in Cuba, therefore, May 25 has special significance for us—so special that an Argentine is greeting and hosting you on behalf of the Cuban government and conveying to you its congratulations. The new conditions in Latin America, conditions that have ripened over the course of time, have consolidated this new era in which we live, this new historical moment, in which Cuba has the special glory of being the initiator in Latin America.

Therefore, when speaking of the liberation movements, recalling the old feats of our wars of independence, we must remember today's Cuba, because this Cuba is part of an old effort of the masses to obtain their definitive liberation, an effort that has not yet completely succeeded even in Cuba. We must struggle to wipe out the old economic systems that oppress us, to free ourselves of all of the problems that dependence on foreign capital—mainly, dependence on US monopolies—has brought us in our development and to defend the freedom and well-being of our people that we have achieved in these years of struggle.

May 25, 1810, witnessed one of the many cries that were emitted in different countries in that period. The Spanish monopoly was coming to an end, and everywhere the peoples were trying to win their freedom. A similar cry had been made in Bolivia the year before, and the struggle for freedom had also begun on the other side of Latin America. That cry of May 25, 1810, was neither the only nor the first one of its kind, but it had the essential virtue of holding firm and being consolidated; it had the virtue of triumphing at that time.

Likewise, today's Cuban revolution has been neither the only nor the first such effort. Other revolutions have taken place in this period and have tried to take the step that the Cuban revolution has taken, but not all the required conditions existed and the governments created by those popular movements were overthrown. The most advanced, most moving case is that of Árbenz's Guatemala, which was destroyed by the US monopolies.

Cuba, like the heroes of May 25, 1810, has no other or special virtue; it is neither more nor less than an example of how the people can achieve victory—not an original one, not one based on proposals conceived of for the first time and not using a strategy that is unique in history.

The Cuban revolution simply made the most of the historical moment in which it developed. It applied revolutionary strategy correctly and united the masses who sought change under the leadership of a movement that, at

a given moment, interpreted the aspirations of the Cuban people. The revolution followed a leader with extraordinary qualities who, like all great leaders, united the people and, in the special conditions in which we were waging our struggle in the Sierra, in the difficult conditions of guerrilla warfare, and on the plains, brought together an army of peasants that advanced on the cities and drew in the working class. An army of peasants defeated the dictatorship's army in many pitched battles; and, coming from the countryside, entered the city and then dedicated itself to destroying systematically the old established order—naturally, beginning with the most powerful arm of the reaction, which was the army. The first thing every victorious revolution must do is completely reform the defeated army, replacing it with a new army and establishing class rule.

We did that, and that was our virtue. This is the experience that we can show the other peoples of the world—especially the other Latin American peoples, with more strength and more suffering because we speak the same language, have gone through the same experiences and understand one another very easily.

Therefore, we have an experience here—naturally, not the only one; we would never consider that the Cuban experience blazes the only path for Latin America's liberation. But it is an important one, an effective demonstration that the repressive armies can be destroyed, that the people can arm their combative vanguard by teaching it how to fight and destroy the enemy army, how to harass and finally crush it. We can also show here how the masses grow and develop—the development of revolutionary consciousness is one of the most interesting phenomena.

We all know that, to be successful, a revolution requires certain objective and subjective conditions. The government against which the revolution is directed has to be given a sound beating and have lost its ability to react. The objective conditions exist throughout Latin America; there are no Latin American countries where they aren't at a peak. However, the subjective conditions haven't ripened to the same extent in all countries. We have shown that, in Cuba's special conditions, the subjective conditions ripened during the armed struggle; the armed struggle was a catalyst that made those conditions more acute, carrying them to an extreme; and political awareness was born.

Awareness of the need for change in a given social situation and confidence in the possibility of effecting that change—those are what we call subjective conditions. The masses in Latin America are very aware of the need for change, but they aren't always aware of the possibility of bringing about change, the possibility of seizing power. The peoples aren't always aware of their strength.

The armed struggle in Cuba developed the people's faith in their own strength, turning it into confidence in victory and even enabling us to throw ourselves against the enemy's weapons; defeat its numerical superiority in terms of armed soldiers, firepower and modern weapons; attack it at a disadvantage of sometimes one to 10; and destroy all its focal points until victory was won. After this, the other stage also begins—the stage we're living in now—which may be more difficult, more arduous, than the stage of the war. I repeat: this is what we can show you. We have the moral duty and obligation of showing it to you so you can study and analyze—but not copy—it.

When enough time has passed to make the Cuban revolution a topic for historical studies and the future generations call some of those who took part in this revolution heroes of that time, then the revolution will have the virtues which I've just listed: of having shown other Latin American peoples what an armed people can do when it has chosen its revolutionary strategy well and when its revolutionary army is well led.

Naturally, every Latin American country has specific conditions. Some of them have wonderful conditions for guerrilla struggle; in some, the peasants have very advanced thinking, and the war can be fought more favorably. In others, the working class, the urban population, is much more advanced, and the conditions for waging a war are more difficult.

We aren't experts who have specialized in subversion—although there are experts who are specialists in combating subversion—but we do know one thing, and that is that an armed man is worth just as much as or more than another man who is armed, depending on the ideology motivating him to take up arms. Moreover, to be armed, a man must obtain a weapon, and weapons don't appear through spontaneous generation; neither are they found just around the corner; the weapons are held by the enemy's army, the oppressor's army. To achieve revolutionary liberation, you must use

those weapons you have and, with them, take new weapons away from the enemy and turn your small army into a great people's army.

Please excuse my military emphasis on weapons, but we're celebrating a day on which the Argentine people expressed their determination to seize independence from Spanish rule and, after holding an open meeting—after having those discussions which we remember year after year in ceremonies such as this and after hearing the statements of the Spanish bishops, who refused to seek independence and who expressed the racial superiority of Spain. After all, that political triumph had to be implemented and the Argentine people had to take up arms. And then, after taking up arms and expelling the Spanish invaders from all their borders, even more compañeros had to ensure Argentina's independence—and that of her sister Latin American nations—so the Argentine armies crossed the Andes to help liberate other peoples.

When the liberating feats are remembered, we are especially proud—more than of having obtained our territory's freedom and of having defended it against encroachment by the royalist forces—the role our forces, our armies, played in the liberation of Chile and Peru.

Rather than an act of altruism by the revolutionary forces, it was a pressing need of military strategy to obtain a victory of continental scope, since partial victories were impossible. The only alternatives were the complete triumph or the complete defeat of revolutionary ideas, and that is also true today. Here on this small Caribbean island, surrounded by the sea—and by enemies, too—the history made in Argentina is being repeated.

Our revolution needs to spread its ideas, needs other people to embrace it, needs other Latin American peoples, filled with energy, to take up arms—or seize power, whichever, because, when you seize power, you have to take up arms afterwards—and help us in this task, which is the task of all Latin America and all humankind: the global task of struggling against the destruction wrought by our monopolist, imperialist enemy, which won't be defeated until the last of its magnates goes to jail or to the scaffold. It won't end until we bring about the total defeat of imperialism, and we draw closer to that day every time the popular forces wage and win a battle anywhere in Latin America or in the rest of the world.

The Asian and African peoples are just as much our brothers—just as much brothers and sisters in our destiny—as are the other Latin American

peoples. The people of Algeria, who are winning their independence, and the people of Vietnam and of Laos, who are giving their lives to obtain theirs, are just as much our brothers as are the people of Venezuela, Paraguay, Peru and Argentina.

They are all part of a single struggle—which imperialism calls by the same name, even though ideologies change and are acknowledged as communist or socialist, Peronist or any other "-ist," representing the political ideology in a given country. There are only two positions in history: either you're for the monopolies, or you're against them, and all those who are against the monopolies can be called by the same name.

In this, US imperialism is right: those of us fighting for our peoples' liberation are united in the struggle (even if we don't know it) by our goal of wiping out imperialism. We are all allies, although we may not know this, either; although our own forces are sometimes divided by internal quarrels; and even though pointless arguments sometimes divert our attention from the prime need to oppose imperialism. But all of us who struggle honestly for the liberation of our respective countries are enemies of imperialism. There is no possible position now other than that of struggle or collaboration, and I know that none of you are collaborating with the enemy, none of you is even remotely in favor of imperialism, and all of you are decidedly for Argentina's liberation.

"Liberation," because Argentina is once again in chains. These chains are sometimes hard to see; chains aren't always visible to everyone, but they are shackling the country. Oil goes out on one side, US companies come in on all sides of the country and old victories are being eaten away—and all this is going on slowly, as if a subtle poison were penetrating Argentina, as it is in many other Latin American countries. However, the people are reacting energetically against this penetration, which, in general terms, is subtle but always weighs on the backs of the people. And, when the administrations try to cleanse their hands with an election, this brings on disasters such as the latest one.

Then comes brazen intervention by imperialism, its puppets and all of its aides-de-camp. This creates a familiar situation, and the popular struggles begin. If the leaders of the reaction are skillful, they may channel things toward new forms that will enable them to deceive the people once more; if the leaders of the reaction aren't skillful enough, or if the people

are more alert than they are, the impetus of the masses may take them farther than they have come so far; it may enable them to take the step needed for the working class to seize power. The masses of workers and peasants in our country may learn to take a new path or continue along paths they know well and destroy a power that is already tottering, which is based on fear of bayonets, on the disunity of our forces, and on unawareness of the possibility of change and of struggle, unawareness of how great the people's strength really is and of the comparatively enormous weakness of the repressive force.

If our people learn their lessons well, if they don't allow themselves to be deceived again, and if new disputes don't divert them from their main purpose, which should be that of seizing power—neither more nor less than seizing power—new conditions may arise in Argentina: the conditions represented, in its time, by May 25; the conditions of a total change. Only, in this period of colonialism and imperialism, total change will mean the step that we have taken, the step toward the declaration of a socialist revolution and the establishment of a power dedicated to the construction of socialism.

When you come right down to it, socialism is an economic stage of humankind; like it or not, we must pass through this stage. We may delay or advance it—that part of the struggle corresponds to the leaders of the two great opposing forces. If the reaction does an effective job of directing its guns, its weapon of division and its weapon of intimidation, it may keep socialism from coming to a given country for many years. But, if the people use their ideology correctly, apply their revolutionary strategy well, choose the right moment for making their attack, and do so fully and without fear, revolutionary power may come very soon in any Latin American country—specifically, Argentina.

Compañeros, whether the historic experience of May 25 is repeated in these new conditions or not depends on the Argentine people and their leaders—that is, it depends on you. Therefore, you have a great responsibility: to struggle and lead the people, who have already begun using every conceivable means to express their determination to break the old chains and to free themselves of the new ones with which imperialism is threatening to shackle them.

Let us, therefore, take up the hackneyed, often distorted example of May 25; let us take up the example of the liberating revolution that issued from its borders—filled with a new ideology that was not its own but which it had adopted to convey its message to the rest of Latin America—and let us think of these moments, when a type of May 25 has appeared in the Caribbean, revolutionary proclamations are being launched from here that will reach all Latin American peoples and the Declaration of Havana stands out as a declaration of human rights for the peoples of this era.

Let us think about the indestructible unity of all of Latin America; let us think about everything that links and unites us—not about what divides us. Let us think about all of the qualities we have in common; about our economies, which are all distorted; about the fact that each nation is shackled by the same imperialism. Let us think about being part of an army that is fighting for liberation in every part of the world that has not been liberated yet, and let us get ready to celebrate another May 25—not in this generous land, but in our own land, under new symbols: under the symbols of victory, the construction of socialism and the future.

1963

Article

This article was first published in *Cuba Socialista* in September 1963. It summarizes some of the main points Che made in his book *Guerrilla Warfare* that was first published in 1961.

Guerrilla Warfare: A Method

Guerrilla warfare has been employed throughout history on innumerable occasions and in different circumstances to obtain different objectives. Lately it has been employed in various wars of liberation when the vanguard of a people has chosen the road of irregular armed struggle against enemies of superior military power. Asia, Africa and Latin America have been the scenes of such actions in attempts to win power in the struggle against feudal, neocolonial or colonial exploitation. In Europe, guerrilla units have been used as supplements to native or allied regular armies.

Guerrilla warfare has been employed in the Americas on several occasions. We have had, as a case in point, the experience of Augusto César Sandino fighting against the Yankee expeditionary force on Nicaragua's Segovia [River]. Recently we had Cuba's revolutionary war. In the Americas since then the problem of guerrilla war has been raised in theoretical discussions by the progressive parties of the continent with the question of whether its utilization is possible or convenient. This has become the focus of highly controversial polemics.

This article will express our views on guerrilla warfare and its correct utilization. Above all, we must emphasize at the outset that this form of struggle is a means to an end. That end, essential and inevitable for any revolutionary, is the conquest of political power. In the analysis of specific situations in different countries of America, we must therefore use the

concept of guerrilla warfare in the limited sense of a method of struggle in order to gain that end.

Almost immediately the questions arise: Is guerrilla warfare the only formula for seizing power in Latin America? Or, at any rate, will it be the predominant form? Or will it simply be one formula among many used during the struggle? And ultimately we may ask: Is Cuba's example applicable to the present situation on the continent? In the course of polemics, those who want to undertake guerrilla warfare are criticized for forgetting mass struggle, implying that guerrilla warfare and mass struggle are opposed to each other. We reject this implication, for guerrilla warfare is a people's war; an attempt to carry out this type of war without the population's support is a prelude to inevitable disaster. The guerrilla is the combat vanguard of the people, situated in a specified place in a certain region, armed and willing to carry out a series of warlike actions for the one possible strategic end—the seizure of power. The guerrilla is supported by the peasant and worker masses of the region and of the whole territory in which it acts. Without these prerequisites, guerrilla warfare is not possible.

> We consider that the Cuban revolution contributed three fundamental lessons to the revolutionary movement in the Americas. First, popular forces can win a war against the army. Second, it is not always necessary to wait for all conditions favorable to revolution to be present; the insurrection itself can create them. Third, in the underdeveloped parts of America, the battleground for armed struggle should, in the main, be the countryside.[1]

These are the contributions to the development of the revolutionary struggle in America, and they can be applied to any of the countries on our continent where guerrilla warfare may develop. The Second Declaration of Havana points out:

> In our countries two circumstances are linked: underdeveloped industry and an agrarian system of feudal character. No matter how hard the living conditions of the urban workers are, the rural population lives under even worse conditions of oppression and exploitation. With few exceptions, the rural population also constitutes

the absolute majority, comprising more than 70 percent of the Latin American populations.

Not counting the landowners, who often live in the cities, this great mass earns its livelihood by working for miserable wages as peons on plantations. They till the soil under conditions of exploitation no different from those of the Middle Ages. These circumstances determine in Latin America that the poor rural population constitutes a tremendous potential revolutionary force.

The armies in Latin America are set up and equipped for conventional warfare. They are the force through which the power of the exploiting classes is maintained. When they are confronted with the irregular warfare of peasants based on their home ground, they become absolutely powerless; they lose 10 men for every revolutionary fighter who falls. Demoralization among them mounts rapidly when they are beset by an invisible and invincible army which provides them no chance to display their military academy tactics and their military fanfare, of which they boast so heavily, and which they use to repress the city workers and students.

The initial struggle of the small fighting units is constantly nurtured by new forces; the mass movement begins to grow bold, bit by bit the old order breaks into a thousand pieces, and that is when the working class and the urban masses decide the battle.

What is it that from the very beginning of the fight makes these units invincible, regardless of the numbers, strengths and resources of their enemies? It is the people’s support, and they can count on an ever-increasing mass support.

The peasantry, however, is a class that because of the ignorance in which it has been kept and the isolation in which it lives, requires the revolutionary and political leadership of the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals. It cannot launch the struggle and achieve victory alone.

In the present historical conditions of Latin America, the national bourgeoisie cannot lead the antifeudal and anti-imperialist struggle. Experience demonstrates that in our nations this class—even when its interests clash with those of Yankee imperialism—has been incapable

> of confronting imperialism, paralyzed by fear of social revolution and frightened by the clamor of the exploited masses.

Completing the foresight of the preceding statements that constitute the essence of the revolutionary declaration of Latin America, the Second Declaration of Havana states:

> The subjective conditions in each country, the factors of revolutionary consciousness, organization and leadership, can accelerate or delay revolution, depending on the state of their development. Sooner or later in each historic epoch objective conditions ripen, consciousness is acquired, organization is achieved, leadership arises, and revolution takes place.
>
> Whether this takes place peacefully or comes into the world after painful labor does not depend on the revolutionaries; it depends on the reactionary forces of the old society, who resist the birth of the new society engendered by contradictions carried in the womb of the old. Revolutions, historically, are like the doctor assisting at the birth of a new life, who will not use forceps unless they are necessary, but who will use them unhesitatingly every time labor requires them. A revolution is a labor bringing the hope of a better life to the enslaved and exploited masses.
>
> In many Latin American countries revolution is inevitable. This fact is not determined by the will of any person. It is determined by the horrifying conditions of exploitation under which the Latin American people live, the development of a revolutionary consciousness in the masses, the worldwide crisis of imperialism and the universal liberation movements of the subjugated nations.

We shall begin from this basis to analyze the whole matter of guerrilla warfare in Latin America.

We have already established that it is a means of struggle to attain an end. First, our concern is to analyze the end in order to determine whether the winning of power in Latin America can be achieved in ways other than armed struggle.

Peaceful struggle can be carried out through mass movements that compel governments to yield in special crisis situations. Thus, the popular forces would eventually take over and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. Theoretically this is correct. When analyzing this in the Latin American context, we must reach the following conclusions: Generally on this continent objective conditions exist that propel the masses to violent action against their bourgeois and landholding governments. In many countries there are crises of power and also some subjective conditions necessary for revolution. It is clear, of course, that in those countries where all these conditions are found, it would be criminal not to act to seize power. In other countries, where these conditions are not present, it is right that different alternatives will appear and out of theoretical discussions tactics suitable to each country should emerge. The only thing history does not allow is that the analysts and executors of proletarian politics be mistaken.

No one can solicit the role of vanguard party as if it were a diploma given by a university. To be the vanguard party means to be at the forefront of the working class through the struggle for winning power. It means to know how to guide this fight through shortcuts to victory. This is the mission of our revolutionary parties and the analysis must be profound and exhaustive so that there will be no mistakes.

At the present time we can observe in America an unstable balance between oligarchical dictatorship and popular pressure. By “oligarchical” we mean the reactionary alliance between the bourgeoisie and the landowning class of each country in which feudalism remains to a greater or lesser degree.

These dictatorships carry on within a certain “legal” framework adjudicated by themselves to facilitate their work in the unrestricted period of their class domination. Yet we are passing through a stage in which pressure from the masses is very strong and is straining bourgeois legality so that its own authors must violate it in order to halt the impetus of the masses.

Barefaced violation of all legislation or of laws specifically instituted to sanction ruling class deeds only increases the pressure from the popular forces. The oligarchical dictatorships then attempt to use the old legal order to alter constitutionality and further oppress the proletariat without a direct

confrontation. At this point a contradiction arises. The people no longer support the old, and much less the new, coercive measures established by the dictatorship and try to smash them. We should never forget the class character, authoritarian and restrictive, that typifies the bourgeois state. Lenin refers to it in the following manner [in *State and Revolution]:* "The state is the product and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where, and to the extent that class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable."

In other words, we should not allow the word "democracy" to be utilized apologetically to represent the dictatorship of the exploiting classes; to lose its deeper meaning and acquire that of granting the people certain liberties, more or less adequate. To struggle only to restore a certain degree of bourgeois legality without considering the question of revolutionary power is to struggle for the return of a dictatorial order established by the dominant social classes. In other words, it is to struggle for a lighter iron ball to be fixed to the prisoner's chain.

In these conditions of conflict, the oligarchy breaks its own contracts, its own mask of "democracy," and attacks the people, though it will always try to use the superstructure it has created for the purpose of repression. We are faced once again with a dilemma: What must be done? Our reply is: Violence is not the monopoly of the exploiters and as such the exploited can use it too and, moreover, ought to use it when the moment arrives. [José] Martí said, "He who wages war in a country when he can avoid it is a criminal, just as he who fails to promote war which cannot be avoided is a criminal."

Lenin said, "Social democracy has never taken a sentimental view of war. It unreservedly condemns war as a bestial means of settling conflicts in human society. But social democracy knows that as long as society is divided into classes, as long as there is exploitation of human beings by others, wars are inevitable. In order to end this exploitation we cannot walk away from war, which is always and everywhere begun by the exploiters, by the ruling and oppressing classes." He said this in 1905. Later, in *Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution,* a far-reaching analysis of the nature of class struggle, he affirmed: "Whoever recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society are

the natural and, under certain conditions, inevitable continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. All the great revolutions prove this. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, would mean sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the socialist revolution." That is to say, we should not fear violence, the midwife of new societies, but violence should be unleashed at that precise moment in which the leaders have found the most favorable circumstances.

What will these be? Subjectively, they depend on two factors that complement each other and which deepen during the struggle: consciousness of the necessity of change and confidence in the possibility of this revolutionary change. Both of these factors—combined with the objective conditions (favorable everywhere in Latin America for the development of the struggle) — and the firm will to achieve revolutionary change, as well as the new correlation of forces in the world, will determine the mode of action.

Regardless of how far away the socialist countries may be, their favorable influence will be felt by the people who struggle, just as their example will give the people further strength. Fidel Castro said on July 26 [1963]:

> The duty of the revolutionaries, especially at this moment, is to know how to recognize and how to take advantage of the changes in the correlation of forces that have taken place in the world and to understand that these changes facilitate the people's struggle. The duty of revolutionaries, of Latin American revolutionaries, is not to wait for the change in the correlation of forces to produce a miracle of social revolutions in Latin America, but to take full advantage of everything that is favorable to the revolutionary movement—and to make revolution!

There are some who say, "Let us admit that in certain specific cases revolutionary war is the best means to achieve political power; but where do we find the great leaders, the Fidel Castros, who will lead us to victory?" Fidel Castro, like any other human being, is the product of history. The political and military leaders who will lead the insurrectional uprisings in the Americas, merged if possible in one person, will learn the art of war

during the course of war itself. There exists neither trade nor profession that can be learned from books alone. In this case, the struggle itself is the great teacher.

Of course, the task will not be easy and it is not exempt from grave dangers.

During the development of armed struggle, there are two moments of extreme danger for the future of the revolution. The first of these arises in the preparatory stage and the way it is dealt with will give the measure of determination to struggle as well as clarity of purpose of the popular forces. When the bourgeois state advances against the people's positions, obviously there must arise a process of defense against the enemy who, at this point, being superior, attacks. If the basic subjective and objective conditions are ripe, the defense must be armed so that the popular forces will not merely become recipients of the enemy's blows. Nor should the armed defense camp be allowed to be transformed into the refuge of the pursued.

The guerrilla army, the defensive movement of the people, at a given moment carries within itself the capacity to attack the enemy and must develop this constantly. This capacity is what determines, with the passing of time, the catalytic character of the popular forces. That is, guerrilla warfare is not passive self-defense; it is defense with attack. From the moment we recognize it as such, it has as its final goal the conquest of political power.

This moment is important. In social processes the difference between violence and nonviolence cannot be measured by the number of shots exchanged; rather it lies in concrete and fluctuating situations. We must be able to see the right moment in which the popular forces, conscious of their relative weakness and their strategic strength, must take the initiative against the enemy so the situation will not deteriorate. The equilibrium between oligarchic dictatorship and popular pressure must be changed. The dictatorship tries to function without resorting to force so we must try to oblige it to do so, thereby unmasking its true nature as the dictatorship of the reactionary social classes. This event will deepen the struggle to such an extent that there will be no retreat from it. The success of the popular forces depends on the task of forcing the dictatorship to a decision—to retreat, or to unleash the struggle — thus beginning the stage of long-range armed action.

Skillful avoidance of the next dangerous moment depends on the growing power of the popular forces. Marx always recommended that once the revolutionary process has begun the proletariat should strike blows again and again without rest. A revolution that does not constantly expand is a revolution that regresses. The combatants, if weary, begin to lose faith, and at this point some of the bourgeois maneuvers may bear fruit—for example, by holding of elections to turn a government over to another gentleman with a sweeter voice and a more angelic face than the outgoing tyrant, or the staging of a coup by reactionaries, generally led by the army, with the direct or indirect support of the progressive forces. There are others, but it is not our intention to analyze all such tactical stratagems.

Let us focus on the military coup mentioned previously. What can the military contribute to democracy? What kind of loyalty can be asked of them if they are merely an instrument of domination for the reactionary classes and imperialist monopolies and if, as a caste whose worth rests on the weapons in their hands, they aspire only to maintain their prerogatives?

When, in difficult situations for the oppressors, the military establishment conspires to overthrow a dictator who in reality has already been defeated, it can be said that they do so because the dictator is unable to preserve their class prerogatives without extreme violence, a method that generally does not suit the interests of the oligarchies at that point.

This statement does not mean to reject the service of military men as individual fighters who, once separated from the society they served, have in fact now rebelled against it. They should be utilized in accordance with the revolutionary line they adopt as fighters and not as representatives of a caste.

A long time ago Engels, in the preface to the third edition of *Civil War in France*, wrote:

> The workers were armed after every revolution; for this reason the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeoisie at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers there was a new struggle ending with the defeat of the workers.

This play of continuous struggle, in which some change is obtained and then strategically withdrawn, has been repeated for many dozens of years in the capitalist world. Moreover, the permanent deception of the proletariat along these lines has been practiced for over a century.

There is a danger also that progressive party leaders, wishing to maintain conditions more favorable for revolutionary action through the use of certain aspects of bourgeois legality, will lose sight of their goal (which is common during the action), thus forgetting the primary strategic objective: *the seizure of power.*

These two difficult moments in the revolution, analyzed briefly here, become obvious when the leaders of Marxist-Leninist parties are capable of clearly perceiving the implications of the moments and of mobilizing the masses to the fullest, leading them on the correct path of resolving fundamental contradictions.

In developing this thesis, we have assumed that eventually the idea of armed struggle, as well as guerrilla warfare as a method of struggle, will be accepted. Why do we think that in the present situation in the Americas guerrilla warfare is the best method? There are fundamental arguments that in our opinion determine the necessity of guerrilla action as the central axis of struggle in the Americas.

First, accepting as true that the enemy will fight to maintain itself in power, one must think about destroying the oppressor army. To do this, a people’s army is necessary. Such an army is not born spontaneously; rather it must be armed from the enemy’s arsenal and this requires a long and difficult struggle in which the popular forces and their leaders will always be exposed to attack from superior forces and will be without adequate defense and maneuverability.

On the other hand, the guerrilla nucleus, established in terrain favorable for the struggle, ensures the security and continuity of the revolutionary command. The urban forces, led by the general staff of the people’s army, can perform actions of the greatest importance. The eventual destruction of these groups, however, would not kill the soul of the revolution; its leadership would continue from its rural bastion to spark the revolutionary spirit of the masses and would continue to organize new forces for other battles.

More importantly, in this region begins the construction of the future state apparatus entrusted to lead the class dictatorship efficiently during the transition period. The longer the struggle becomes, the larger and more complex the administrative problems; and in solving them, cadres will be trained for the difficult task of consolidating power and, at a later stage, economic development.

Second, there is the general situation of the Latin American peasantry and the ever more explosive character of the struggle against feudal structures within the framework of an alliance between local and foreign exploiters.

Returning to the Second Declaration of Havana:

> At the outset of the past century, the peoples of the Americas freed themselves from Spanish colonialism, but they did not free themselves from exploitation. The feudal landlords assumed the authority of the governing Spaniards, the Indians continued in their painful serfdom, the Latin American remained a slave one way or another, and the minimal hopes of the peoples died under the power of the oligarchies and the tyranny of foreign capital. This is the truth of the Americas, to one or another degree of variation. Latin America today is under a more ferocious imperialism that is more powerful and ruthless than the Spanish colonial empire.
>
> What is Yankee imperialism's attitude toward confronting the objective and historically inexorable reality of the Latin American revolution? To prepare to fight a colonial war against the peoples of Latin America; to create an apparatus of force establishing the political pretexts and the pseudo-legal instruments underwritten by the representatives of the reactionary oligarchies in order to curb, by blood and by iron, the struggle of the Latin American peoples.

This objective situation shows the dormant force of our peasants and the need to utilize it for Latin America's liberation.

Third, there is the continental nature of the struggle. Could we imagine this stage of Latin American emancipation as the confrontation of two local forces struggling for power in a specific territory? Hardly. The struggle

between the popular forces and the forces of repression will be to the death. This also is predicted within the paragraphs cited previously.

The Yankees will intervene due to conjunction of interest and because the struggle in Latin America is decisive. As a matter of fact they are intervening already, preparing the forces of repression and the organization of a continental apparatus of repression. But from now on they will do so with all their energy; they will punish the popular forces with all the destructive weapons at their disposal. They will not allow a revolutionary power to consolidate; and, if it ever happens, they will attack again, they will not recognize such a power, and will try to divide the revolutionary forces. They will infiltrate saboteurs, create border problems, force other reactionary states to oppose it and will impose economic sanctions attempting, in a word, to annihilate the new state.

This being the panorama in Latin America, it is difficult to achieve and consolidate victory in an isolated country. The unity of the repressive forces must be confronted with the unity of the popular forces. In all countries where oppression reaches intolerable proportions, the banner of rebellion must be raised; and this banner of historical necessity will have a continental character.

As Fidel has said, the cordillera of the Andes will be the Sierra Maestra of Latin America; and the immense territory this continent encompasses will become the scene of a life or death struggle against imperialism.

We cannot predict when this struggle will reach a continental dimension or how long it will last. But we can predict its advent and triumph because it is the inevitable result of historical, economic and political conditions; and its direction cannot change.

The task of the revolutionary forces in each country is to initiate the struggle when the conditions are present there, regardless of the conditions in other countries. The development of the struggle will bring about the general strategy. The prediction of the continental character of the struggle is the outcome of the analysis of the strength of each contender but this does not exclude independent outbreaks. The beginning of the struggle in one area of a country is bound to cause its development throughout the region; the beginning of a revolutionary war contributes to the development of new conditions in the neighboring countries.

The development of revolution has usually produced high and low tides in inverse proportion. To the revolution's high tide corresponds the counterrevolutionary low tide and vice versa, as there is a counterrevolutionary ascendancy in moments of revolutionary decline. In those moments, the situation of the popular forces becomes difficult and they should resort to the best means of defense in order to suffer the least damage. The enemy is extremely powerful and has a continental range. The relative weakness of the local bourgeoisie cannot, therefore, be analyzed with a view to making decisions within restricted boundaries. Still less can one think of an eventual alliance by these oligarchies with a people in arms.

The Cuban revolution sounded the bell that raised the alarm. The polarization of forces will become complete: exploiters on one side and exploited on the other. The mass of the petty bourgeoisie will lean to one side or the other according to their interests and the political skill with which they are handled. Neutrality will be an exception. This is how revolutionary war will be.

Let us think how a guerrilla foco can start. Nuclei with relatively few people choose places favorable for guerrilla warfare with the intention of either unleashing a counterattack or weathering the storm, and from there they start taking action. What follows, however, must be very clear: At the beginning the relative weakness of the guerrilla is such that they should work only toward becoming acquainted with the terrain and its surroundings while establishing connections with the population and fortifying the places that will eventually be converted into bases.

There are three conditions for survival that a guerrilla force must embrace if it is emerging subject to the premises described here: constant mobility, constant vigilance and constant distrust. Without these three elements of military tactics the guerrilla will find it hard to survive. We must remember that the heroism of the guerrilla fighter, at this moment, consists of the scope of the planned goal and the enormous number of sacrifices they must make in order to achieve it. These sacrifices are not made in daily combat or in face-to-face battle with the enemy; rather they will take subtler forms, more difficult for the guerrilla fighter to resist both physically and mentally.

Perhaps the guerrillas will be punished heavily by the enemy, divided at times into groups, while at other times those who are captured will be

tortured. They will be pursued as hunted animals in the areas where they have chosen to operate; the constant anxiety of having the enemy on their track will be with them. They must distrust everyone, for the terrorized peasants will in some cases give them away to the repressive troops in order to save themselves. Their only alternatives are life or death, at times when death is a concept a thousand times present and victory only a myth for a revolutionary to dream about.

This is the guerrilla's heroism. For this it is said that walking is a form of fighting and that avoiding combat at a given moment is another. Facing the general superiority of the enemy at a given place, one must find the tactics with which to gain relative superiority at that moment, either by being capable of concentrating more troops than the enemy or by using the terrain fully and well in order to secure advantages that unbalance the correlation of forces. In these conditions tactical victory is assured; if relative superiority is not clear, it is better not to act. As long as the guerrilla army is in the position of deciding the "how" and the "when," no combat should be fought that will not end in victory.

Within the framework of the great political-military action of which they are a part, the guerrilla army will grow and be consolidated. Bases will continue to be formed, for they are essential to the success of the guerrilla army. These bases are points the enemy can enter only at the cost of heavy losses; they are the revolution's bastions, they are both refuges and the starting point for the guerrilla army's more daring and distant raids.

This point is reached if difficulties of a tactical and political nature have been overcome. The guerrillas cannot forget their function as the vanguard of the people—their mandate—and as such they must create the necessary political conditions for the establishment of a revolutionary power based on the support of the masses. The peasants' aspirations or demands must be satisfied to the degree and in the form that circumstances permit so as to bring about the decisive support and solidarity of the whole population.

If the guerrillas' military situation is difficult from the very first moment, the political situation is just as delicate. If a single military error can liquidate the guerrilla, a political error can hold back its development for long periods. The struggle is political-military and it must be developed and understood as such.

In the process of the guerrilla's growth, the fighting reaches a point where its capacity for action in a given region is so great there are too many fighters in too great a concentration. Then begins the "beehive action" in which one of the commanders, a distinguished guerrilla, moves to another region and repeats the chain of development of guerrilla warfare. That commander is nevertheless subject to a central command.

It is imperative to point out that one cannot hope for victory without the formation of a people's army. The guerrilla forces can be expanded to a certain magnitude; the popular forces in the cities and in other areas can inflict losses; but the military potential of the reactionaries will still remain intact. One must always keep in mind the fact that the final objective is the enemy's annihilation. All these new zones created, as well as the infiltrated zones behind enemy lines and the forces operating in the principal cities, should be unified under one command.

Guerrilla war or liberation war will generally have three stages. First is the strategic defensive stage when the small force nibbles at the enemy and runs. It is not sheltered to make a passive defense within a small circumference, but rather its defense consists of the limited attacks it can successfully make. After this comes a state of equilibrium in which the possibilities of action on both sides—the enemy and the guerrillas—are established. Finally, the last stage consists of overrunning the repressive army leading to the capture of the big cities, large-scale decisive encounters, and ultimately the complete annihilation of the enemy.

After reaching a state of equilibrium, when both sides respect each other, the guerrilla war develops and acquires new characteristics. The concept of maneuver is introduced: large columns attacking strong points; mobile warfare with the shifting of forces and relatively potent means of attack. But due to the capacity for resistance and counterattack that the enemy still has, this war of maneuver does not replace guerrilla fighting; rather, it is only one form of action taken by the guerrillas until that time when they crystallize into a people's army with an army corps. Even at this moment the guerrilla, marching ahead of the action of the main forces, will continue the tactics of the first stage, destroying communications and sabotaging the whole defensive apparatus of the enemy.

We have predicted that the war will be continental. This means that it will be a protracted war, it will have many fronts and it will cost much

blood and countless lives for a long period of time.

Another phenomenon occurring in Latin America is the polarization of forces, that is, the clear division between exploiters and exploited. When the armed vanguard of the people achieves power both the imperialists and the national exploiting class will be liquidated at one stroke. The first stage of the socialist revolution will have crystallized and the people will be ready to heal their wounds and initiate the construction of socialism.

Are there less bloody possibilities? A while ago the last dividing-up of the world took place and the United States took the lion's share of our continent. Today the imperialists of the Old World are developing again—and the strength of the European Common Market frightens the United States itself. All this might lead to the belief that the possibility exists for us merely to observe as spectators, perhaps in alliance with the stronger national bourgeoisie, the struggle among the imperialists trying to make further advances. Yet a passive policy never brings good results in class struggle and alliances with the bourgeoisie, although they might appear to be revolutionary, have only a transitory character. The time factor will induce us to choose another ally. The sharpening of the most important contradiction in Latin America appears to be so rapid that it disturbs the "normal" development of the imperialist camp's conflicts in its struggle for markets.

The majority of national bourgeoisie have united with US imperialism so their fate shall be the same. Even in the cases where pacts or common contradictions are shared between the national bourgeoisie and other imperialists, this occurs within the framework of a fundamental struggle that will sooner or later embrace *all the exploited and all the exploiters.* The polarization of antagonistic forces among class adversaries is up to now more rapid than the development of the contradiction among exploiters over dividing the spoils. There are two camps. The alternative becomes clearer for each individual and for each specific stratum of the population.

The Alliance for Progress attempts to slow that which cannot be stopped. But if the advance on the US market by the European Common Market, or any other imperialist group, were more rapid than the development of the fundamental contradiction, the forces of the people would only have to penetrate into the open breach, carrying on the struggle

and utilizing the new intruders while having a clear awareness of what their true intentions are.

Not a single position, weapon or secret should be given to the class enemy, under penalty of losing all. In fact, the eruption of the Latin American struggle has begun. Will its storm center be in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador…? Are today's skirmishes only manifestations of an unrest that has not come to fruition? The outcome of today's struggles does not matter. It does not matter in the final count that one or two movements were temporarily defeated because what is definite is the decision to struggle that matures every day, the consciousness of the need for revolutionary change and the certainty that it is possible.

This is a prediction. We make it with the conviction that history will prove us right. Analysis of the objective and subjective conditions of Latin America and the imperialist world indicates to us the certainty of these assertions based on the Second Declaration of Havana.

---

1. Here Che Guevara is quoting his own work, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press).

Letter (1963)

Letter to Mr. Peter Marucci

Havana
May 4, 1963
Year of Organization

Mr. Peter Marucci
Editor of *The Telegraph*
The Daily Mercury
Guelph, Canada

Compañero,

First of all, I must confess that bureaucracy is solidly and thoroughly entrenched in our country. It absorbs papers; incubates them; and, in time, allows them to reach the people to whom they are addressed.

This is why I haven't replied to your letter before this.

Cuba is a tropical, indomitable, naive and joyous socialist country. It is socialist without losing any of its own characteristics, the socialism adding maturity to its people. It is well worth knowing. We will be happy to welcome you whenever you wish to come.

Sincerely,
Homeland or Death!
We will win!

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

1964

Speech

On December 11, 1964, Che Guevara, representing the revolutionary government of Cuba, addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York stating “the final hour of colonialism has struck.”[1] The representatives of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama and the United States responded with vitriolic attacks, to which Che made the following reply.

Response to the Attacks against Cuba in the UN General Assembly

December 11, 1964

I ask your indulgence for my taking the floor for a second time. I am doing so to exercise my right of reply. Naturally, even though I’m not particularly interested in doing so, I could go on making rejoinders indefinitely.

One by one, I am going to reply to the statements of the delegates who have attacked Cuba’s participation, and I will do so in more or less the same spirit in which each of them made those statements.

I will begin by replying to the delegate of Costa Rica, who deplored the fact that Cuba had allowed itself to be carried away by some lies in the sensationalist press and who said that his government had taken some immediate measures of inspection when the free press of Costa Rica—which is very different from the enslaved press of Cuba—made some denunciations.

It may be that the delegate of Costa Rica is right. I cannot make a definitive statement based on the articles that the imperialist press — especially that of the United States—has repeatedly made about the Cuban

counterrevolutionaries. But, if Artime was the head of the Bay of Pigs invasion, which failed, he was the head of it for just a while, only until the invaders arrived at the Cuban coast and suffered their first casualties, because he went back to the United States then. Most of the members of that “heroic liberating expedition” were “cooks or health personnel”—according to the statements they made after being taken prisoner, all of the “liberators” of Cuba arrived in Cuba in those capacities. Artime, who now starts to be their leader again, was indignant about the accusation. Of what? Of smuggling whiskey? He said there was no contraband whiskey in their bases in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which “trained revolutionaries to free Cuba.” Those statements were made to the news agencies and have gone round the world.

That accusation has been made in Costa Rica many times. Costa Rican patriots have told us about the existence of those bases in the Tortugueras and neighboring areas, and the government of Costa Rica should know very well if it is so or not.

I am absolutely sure that these reports are true, and I am also sure that Mr. Artime, among his many “revolutionary” occupations, also had time to smuggle whiskey, because, among the kind of liberators that the government of Costa Rica is protecting—even if only halfheartedly—that is a perfectly normal thing to do.

I maintain—and have said a thousand and one times—that revolutions are not exported. Revolutions are born in the hearts of the people. Revolutions are engendered by the exploitation that the governments—such as those of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela—impose on their peoples. Later, the liberation movements may or may not receive help —especially moral support—but the fact remains that revolutions cannot be exported.

I’m not saying this to the Assembly as a justification; I’m simply stating it as the expression of a fact that was scientifically established many years ago. Therefore, it would be wrong for us to pretend to export revolutions—especially to Costa Rica, which has a regime that has absolutely nothing in common with us and is not one of the regimes that is notorious in Latin America for its direct, indiscriminate oppression of its peoples.

As for Nicaragua, I would like to tell its representative that, even though I didn’t understand all of his arguments about accents (I think he was

referring to Cuba, Argentina and maybe the Soviet Union, as well), I hope that he has found no trace of a US accent in my address, because that *would* be a dangerous thing to have.

It is true that my accent may contain traces of the Argentine way of speaking, because I was born in Argentina; that's no secret to anybody. I am both Cuban and Argentine, and—I hope the illustrious gentlemen of Latin America won't be offended—I consider myself a Latin American patriot and just as much a citizen of any Latin American country as anyone else and am prepared to give my life for the liberation of any of the Latin American countries whenever necessary without asking anything of anybody, without making any demands and without exploiting anybody. And this temporary representative to this Assembly is not the only one who's prepared to do this. All of the Cuban people suffer every time there is an act of injustice—not only in Latin America, but anywhere in the world. Here, I will repeat what I've before said so often, citing Martí's marvelous maxim that every true human should feel on their cheek the blow dealt to the cheek of any other human. All of the Cuban people feel this way, gentlemen.

If the representative of Nicaragua wants to take a glance at his map or inspect some places that are difficult to access for himself, he can go, in addition to Puerto Cabezas—I don't think he'll deny that a large part of the Bay of Pigs expeditionaries set out from there—to Bluefields and Monkey Point (which I think should be called Punto Mono; I don't know what strange historical reason there is for these places' having English names, since they are in Nicaragua). There, he can find some Cuban counterrevolutionaries—or "revolutionaries," as the representatives of Nicaragua prefer to call them. There are all kinds of them. There is also a lot of whiskey, but I don't know whether it was smuggled in or whether it was imported legally. We know that those bases exist. And, naturally, we aren't going to demand that the OAS investigate if they are there or not. We are only too familiar with the OAS's collective blindness to ask any such thing.

People say we have admitted that we have nuclear weapons. There aren't any. I think the representative of Nicaragua has made a slight mistake. We have simply defended our right to have whatever weapons we

can obtain for our defense, and we have refused to give any other country the right to decide what kind of weapons we will have.

The representative of Panama, who has been kind enough to call me “Che,” as the Cuban people call me, began by speaking about the Mexican Revolution. The Cuban delegation spoke about the US massacre of the Panamanian people, and the delegate of Panama began by speaking about the Mexican Revolution and then went on in that style, without making any reference at all to the US massacre which caused the government of Panama to break off relations with the United States. Perhaps, in the language of sellout politics, this is called tactics; in revolutionary terminology, gentlemen, this is called utter abasement. Reference was made to the 1959 invasion. A group of adventurers headed by a bearded coffee grower—who had never been in the Sierra Maestra and is now in Miami or on a base somewhere else—managed to whip up the enthusiasm of a group of kids and carry out that adventure. Officials of the Cuban government worked together with the Panamanian government to put that effort down. It is true that they left from a Cuban port, and it is also true that we argued with them in a friendly way at the time.

Of all the statements that we have heard here against the Cuban delegation, the one that seems completely inexcusable was the one made by the delegate of Panama. I had absolutely no intention of offending either his delegation or his government. But something else is also true: I didn’t have any intention of defending the government of Panama, either. I wanted to defend the Panamanian people with a denunciation at the United Nations, since their government has neither the courage nor the self-respect to call a spade a spade. I don’t want to offend the government of Panama, but neither do I want to defend it. I extend my sympathy to the fraternal Panamanian people, and I will try to defend them with my denunciation.

There is one very interesting thing among the statements that the representative of Panama made. He said that, in spite of all the Cubans’ bragging, the [US naval] base is still there. In his address, which is still fresh in the memories of the representatives, he had to admit that we have denounced over 11,300 acts of provocation “of all kinds” from the base, running from trivial ones to shots fired. I have explained that we don’t want to engage in acts of provocation, because we are aware of the consequences they may bring for our people; we have raised the problem of the

Guantánamo Base in all international conferences and have always demanded respect for the Cuban people's right to recover that base by peaceful means.

We haven't engaged in any bragging, because we don't do that; men like ourselves, who are prepared to die and who are leading an entire nation of people who are prepared to die in the defense of their cause, don't need to brag. We didn't brag at the Bay of Pigs; we didn't brag during the October Missile Crisis, when our people were faced with the US threat of a nuclear mushroom and everybody manned the trenches and the factories to increase production. Nobody took a single step backward; nobody complained; and thousands of people who didn't belong to the militias joined them voluntarily when US imperialism was threatening to drop one or several atom bombs or to make a nuclear attack on Cuba. That is what our country is like, and a country such as that, whose leaders and people—I can hold my head high when I say this—have no fear of death and are well aware of the responsibility of their actions, will never brag. What they *will* do is fight to the death, if necessary, and all of the Cuban people will fight to the death alongside their government if they are attacked.

The representative of Colombia stated in measured tones—and I, too, must change my tone—that there were two incorrect statements. One concerned the US invasion in 1948 that was triggered by the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, and the tone of voice of the representative of Colombia showed that he was very sorry about that death; he was deeply grieved.

In my address, I referred to another, earlier intervention which the representative of Colombia may have forgotten: the US intervention which resulted in the separation of Panama from Colombia. Later, he said that there weren't any liberation troops in Colombia, because nothing needs to be liberated there. In Colombia, where people talk so naturally about representative democracy and there are only two political parties, which have shared power on a fifty-fifty basis for many years, in line with an imaginary democracy, we might say that the Colombian oligarchy has reached the apex of democracy. They are divided into Liberals and Conservatives, Conservatives and Liberals—four years for one group, followed by four years for the other. Nothing changes.

That is what elected democracies are like; that is what the representative democracies that the representative of Colombia—that country in which, it is said, 200,000 or 300,000 people have been killed in the civil war since Gaitán's death—defends so enthusiastically are like. Yet he says that nothing needs to be liberated there, there is no need for revenge, there aren't any thousands of dead to be avenged and no armies have been massacring the people since 1948. Some changes have been made; the generals have different names; the officers have different names or take their orders from a different class than the one that massacred the people throughout four years of struggle and that continued to massacre them intermittently for several years after that. Yet he says that nothing needs to be liberated there.

Doesn't the representative of Colombia remember that there are armed forces in Marquetalia—which even the Colombian newspapers have called "the independent Republic of Marquetalia"—and that one of their leaders has been nicknamed *"Tiro Fijo"* in an effort to turn him into a run-of-the-mill bandit? Doesn't he know that 16,000 men of the Colombian Army carried out an enormous operation there with US military advisers, helicopters and probably—though I can't state this as fact—planes from the US Army, as well?

It would seem that either the representative of Colombia's information is unreliable because he's been away from his country or that his memory is somewhat deficient. Moreover, the representative of Colombia stated with great confidence that, if Cuba had remained in the orbit of the Latin American states, things would be different. I'm not exactly sure what he meant by that business of the orbit—satellites have orbits, and Cuba is not a satellite. It is not in any orbit; it's flying free. Naturally, if it were in the same orbit as the other Latin American states, I would have given a honeyed speech several pages long in much more elegant Spanish, with many more nouns and adjectives, and I would have talked about the beauties of the inter-American system and about our firm, unyielding defense of the free world headed by the country around which the others orbit—and you all know who that is; there is no need for me to mention names.

The representative of Venezuela also employed a moderate—though emphatic—tone. He said that the accusations of genocide were infamous and that it was really incredible that the Cuban government would bother

about such things, which concerned Venezuela, when it did the same against its own people. I must say something here that is a known truth and that we have always stated publicly: yes, we carried out executions; we executed some individuals, and we will continue to execute individuals as long as it is necessary. Our struggle is a struggle to the death. We know what a lost battle would mean, and the counterrevolutionaries must also know what it would mean if a battle were lost in Cuba now. US imperialism imposed these conditions.

But we don't perpetrate assassinations—such as the ones that, if I'm not misinformed, members of the Digepol division of the Venezuelan police are carrying out right now. They have engaged in a series of barbaric actions, including executions; after killing students and other people, they dump the bodies, leaving them to be found.

The free press of Venezuela was suspended several times recently because it carried information about such things. Venezuelan military planes whose pilots have US advisers have strafed extensive rural areas and have killed peasants. The people's rebellion is growing in Venezuela, and we will see its results in the future.

The representative of Venezuela is outraged. I remember the outrage of the Venezuelan representatives when the Cuban delegation to the Punta del Este meeting read the secret reports that spokesmen of the United States of America were kind enough to send us—indirectly, of course. At that time, I read to the participants in the Punta del Este meeting the opinion that the representatives of the United States had of the Venezuelan government. They made an extremely interesting announcement, which—forgive me for paraphrasing, but I can't quote it word for word right now—went something like this: "These people will have to change, or everybody will go before a firing squad." A "firing squad" was how they referred to the Cuban revolution.

The members of the US embassy announced in irrefutable documents that that would be the fate of the Venezuelan oligarchy—which was accused of theft and a lot of other serious things—if it didn't change its methods.

The members of the Venezuelan delegation were very indignant. Naturally, they were indignant at the United States and at the Cuban representatives who decided to read the opinions that the US authorities had of their government and of their people. But the only response to all this

was that Mr. Moscoso, who had kindly seen to it that we got the documents, was removed from his position.

I am reminding the representative of Venezuela of this because revolutions are not exported; revolutions act, and the Venezuelan revolution will act when its time comes. Those who don't have a plane waiting—as there was in Cuba—in which to flee to Miami or somewhere else, will have to face whatever the Venezuelan people decide. They shouldn't blame other peoples or other governments for what may happen there. If the representative of Venezuela is interested, I would recommend that he read some very interesting opinions about guerrilla warfare and how to combat it—opinions that some of the most intelligent members of COPEI have written and published in the Venezuelan press…

He will see that bombs and assassinations aren't effective against an armed people. It is precisely this that makes the peoples more revolutionary. As we know very well, it is not right for me to do a professed enemy the favor of teaching him anti-guerrilla strategy, but I'm doing this because I know he's so stubborn that he won't follow my advice.

And then there's Mr. Stevenson. Unfortunately, he is not here. I understand very clearly why Mr. Stevenson is not here.

We have listened yet again to his measured, serious statements, which are worthy of such an intellectual.

Similar emphatic, measured, serious statements were made to the first commission during session 1149A on April 15, 1961, the day on which US pirate planes bearing Cuban insignia—which, as I recall, had taken off from Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, or perhaps from Guatemala (it has not been determined exactly)—strafed several Cuban airports and reduced our air force to almost nothing. After carrying out their "heroic feat" without running any risk, the planes landed in the United States. Mr. Stevenson said some very interesting things in response to our denunciation.

Forgive me for having spoken at such length, but I think it is worth remembering once more the measured phrases such a distinguished intellectual as Mr. Stevenson uttered just four or five days before Mr. Kennedy calmly announced to the world that he accepted full responsibility for what had happened in Cuba. The following are not exact quotes of what Mr. Stevenson said, because I didn't have time to obtain the minutes of all the meetings:

“The accusations made against the United States by the representative of Cuba concerning the bombings that were reported against the airports at Havana and San Antonio de los Baños are completely groundless.”

Mr. Stevenson rejected those accusations categorically.

“As the president of the United States declared, the armed forces of the United States will not intervene in Cuba under any circumstances, and the United States will do everything it can to prevent its citizens from taking part in actions against Cuba.”

Just over a year later, we did them the courtesy of returning the body of a pilot who had crashed on Cuban soil. Not that of Major Anderson; another one from that same period.

“As for the events which, it is said, took place this morning and yesterday, the United States will study the requests for political asylum in line with its customary procedures.”

They were going to give political asylum to the people they’d sent.

“Anyone who believes in freedom and seeks asylum against tyranny and oppression will always meet with understanding and a warm welcome from the American people and from the government of the United States.”

So said Mr. Stevenson in his long and tiresome speech.

Two days later, the hosts of Brigade 2506—which will surely go down in the annals of the history of Latin America for its heroism—landed at the Bay of Pigs. Two days later, the heroic brigade surrendered after having suffered almost no casualties, and then began that parade—which some of you must remember—of men wearing the uniforms of US Army counterrevolutionaries, all of them claiming to be cooks or health personnel or saying they had come on the expedition as sailors.

That was when President Kennedy did the honorable thing. He didn’t try to keep up a policy of lies that nobody believed but clearly stated that he took responsibility for everything that had happened in Cuba. He accepted the responsibility, but the Organization of American States didn’t. Nor, as far as I can remember, did it demand that any of its members take responsibility for their actions—responsibility in terms of their own history and that of the United States, because the Organization of American States was in its orbit.

It didn’t have time for such things.

I thank Mr. Stevenson for his history-making reference to my “long life as a communist and revolutionary” which reached its highest point in Cuba. As always, the US agencies—not only the news agencies but also the espionage ones—have confused matters. My history as a revolutionary is short, really having begun on the *Granma* and continued up to the present.

I didn’t become a member of the Communist Party until after I had arrived in Cuba, and I can tell this assembly that the Cuban revolution follows Marxism-Leninism as its theory of action. Personal references aren’t important; what is important is that Mr. Stevenson once more has said that there has been no law-breaking, that the planes didn’t come from here—nor did the ships, of course—that the pirate attacks came out of the blue and that everything came from nowhere. He spoke in the same tone of voice, with the same confidence and the same accent of a serious and resolute intellectual that he employed in 1961 when he stated emphatically that those Cuban planes had come from Cuban territory and that their pilots were political exiles—before he was disproved. It is easy to understand why my distinguished colleague Mr. Stevenson has thought it wise to withdraw from this Assembly.

The United States claims it has the right to make spy flights because the Organization of American States has approved them. Who does the OAS think it is, that it can approve spy flights over a country’s territory? What role does the United Nations play? What is the United Nations for, if our future is to depend—as the representative of Colombia has so clearly stated—on the orbit of the OAS? This is a very serious and very important question which must be raised before this Assembly. Cuba, a small country, cannot grant a big country the right to violate our airspace—especially when it does so while making the amazing claim that its actions have the legal backing of the OAS, which expelled Cuba and with which Cuba has no ties of any kind.

The statements made by the representative of the United States are very serious.

I would like to say only two small things. I don’t intend to take up all of this Assembly’s time with these replies and rejoinders.

The representative of the United States says that Cuba blames the blockade for its economic disaster, when that disaster is the result of the government’s poor administration. Before any of this had happened, when

the first nationalizing laws began to be passed in Cuba, the United States began to take repressive economic actions, such as its unilateral elimination of the sugar quota that Cuba had traditionally had on the US market. It also refused to refine the oil that, making use of our legitimate rights and supported by every possible law, we had purchased from the Soviet Union.

I won't repeat the long history of acts of economic aggression by the United States, but I will say that, in spite of those acts of aggression and with the fraternal support of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, we have made progress and will continue to do so. We will continue to denounce the economic blockade, but it won't stop us; come what may, we will continue to constitute a small headache when we come to this Assembly or any other to call a spade a spade and the representatives of the United States gendarmes of repression all over the world.

And, yes, the blockade *has* stopped shipments of medicine to Cuba.

To show that this is so, our government will try to buy medicines here in the United States in the coming months and will send a telegram to Mr. Stevenson which our representative will read in the commission or in any other suitable place, so everyone will know whether or not Cuba's accusations are based on fact—which they have been so far. The last time we tried to buy $1.5 million worth of medicine which was not made in Cuba and was needed for saving lives, the US government stepped in and prevented that sale.

A short while ago, the president of Bolivia told our delegates with tears in his eyes that he had to break off relations with Cuba because the United States was forcing him to do so. So our delegates bade farewell to La Paz.

I cannot state that what the president of Bolivia said was true, but I do know that we told him that that agreement with the enemy wouldn't do him any good, because his days were numbered.

The president of Bolivia, with whom we didn't have any ties at that time and with whom we have no ties now—our relations with his administration were simply those that should be maintained with all Latin American nations—has been overthrown by a military coup. Now, a governing junta has been established there.

In any case, people like that who don't go down with dignity should remember something that I think the mother of the last caliph of Granada

said to her son, who was crying because he had lost the city: “You do well to cry like a woman over what you didn’t defend as a man.”

---

1. Che Guevara’s initial address to the United Nations General Assembly earlier on the same day (December 11, 1964) is published in *Che Guevara Reader*, pp. 325-39.

Letter (1964)

Letter to Mr. Roberto Las Casas

Havana
February 21, 1964
Year of the Economy

Mr. Roberto Las Casas
Rua 3 de Maio
Belem-Pará 1494
Brazil

Dear Compañero,

I am taking this new opportunity of contact between you and our revolution to thank you and your wife for your great kindness.

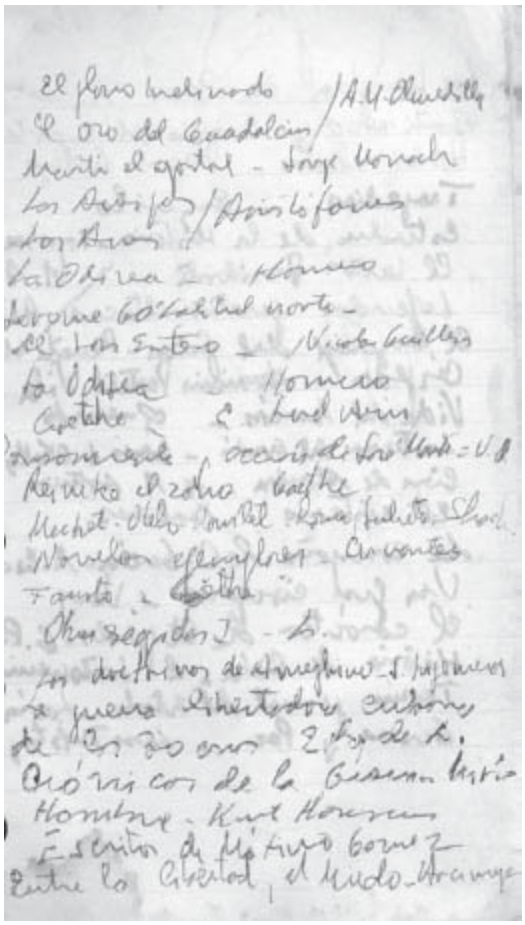
I wanted to send you a small souvenir of Cuba, but the lack of an appropriate past and the extinction of our Cuban traditions force me to resort to this very modest expression of modern art.

I trust that your wife will appreciate the intention more than its material expression.

With revolutionary greetings,
Homeland or Death!
We will win!

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

Page 1 of Che Guevara's Sierra notebook



Reading Lists Cuba 1956–65

The following are facsimilies of pages from Che' Guevara's notebooks listing the books he read in the Sierra Maestra.

Page 1

El Plano Inclinado [The Inclined Plane], A.M. Olmedilla

El Oro del Guadalcín [The Gold of Guadalcín], A.M. Olmedilla

Martí el Apóstol [Martí the Apostle], Jorge Mañach

Las Avispas [Wasps], Aristophanes

Las Aves [Birds], Aristophanes

La Odisea [The Odyssey], Homer

Jerome 60° Latitud norte [Jerome 60° N. Lat.], Maurice Bedel *El Son Entero* [The Whole Son], Nicolás Guillén *Goethe,* E. Ludwig

Pensamiento y Acción de José Martí [The Thought and Actions of José Martí]

Reineke el zorro [Reinike the Fox], Goethe

Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet and *Romeo and Juliet,* Shakespeare

Novelas ejemplares [Exemplary Novels], Cervantes

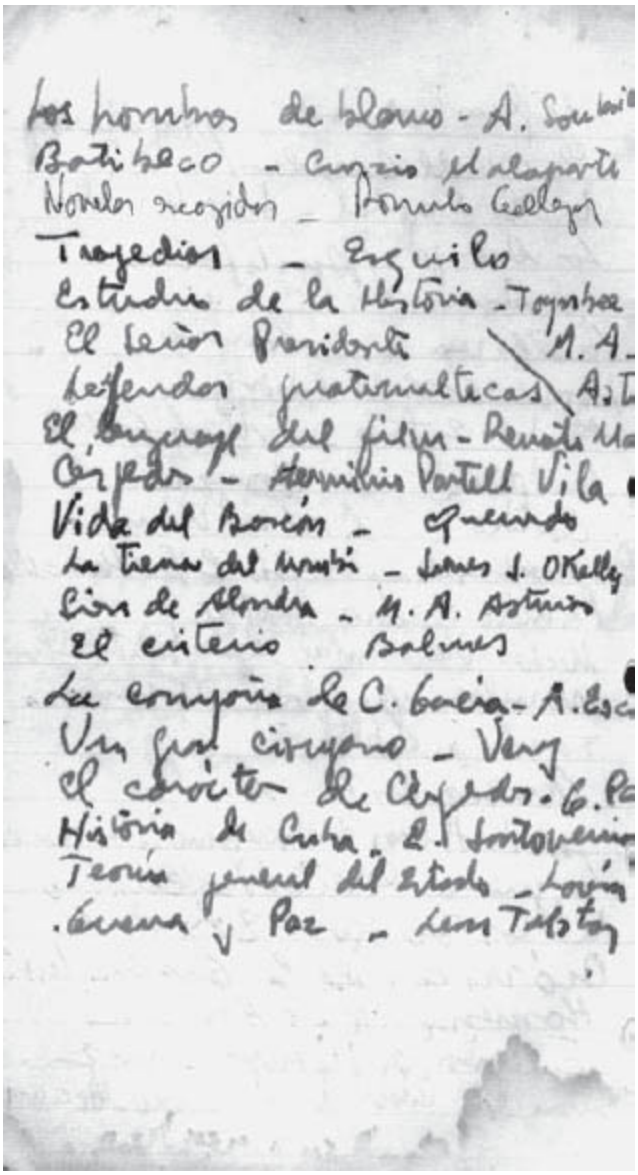
Fausto, Goethe

Obras Escogidas [Selected Works], Lenin

Las doctrinas de Ameghino [The Doctrines of Ameghino], J. Ingenieros

La guerra libertadora cubana de los 30 años [The 30-Year Cuban War of Liberation], E. Roig de Leuchsenring

Page 2 of Che Guevara's Sierra notebook



Crónicas de la guerra [Chronicles of the War], Miró
Hombre [Man], Kurt Hahn
Escritos de Máximo Gómez [Writings of Máximo Gómez]
Entre la libertad y el miedo [Between Freedom and Fear], Arciniegas

Page 2
Los hombres de blanco [Men in White], A. Soubiran
Batibeco, Curzio Malaparte

Novelas Escogidas [Select Novels], Rómulo Gallegos

Tragedias, Aeschylus

Estudio de la Historia [A Study of History], Toynbee

El Señor Presidente, M.A. Asturias

Leyendas Guatemaltecas [Guatemala Legends], M.A. Asturias

El lenguaje del cine [The Language of Film], Renato May

Céspedes, Herminio Portell Vila

Vida del Buscón [Life of Buscón], Quevedo

La Tierra del Mambi [Mambiland], James J. O'Kelly

Sien de Alondra [Temple of the Lark], M.A. Asturias

El Criterio, Balmes

La Campaña de Calixto García [The Campaign of Calixto García], A. Escalante

Un gran cirujano, Very

El carácter de Céspedes, G. Peralta

Historia de Cuba, E. Santovenia

Teoría general del Estado, Lóvena

Guerra y Paz [War and Peace], Leo Tolstoy

Obras [Works], José Martí

PART THREE

THE AMERICAS UNITED: REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALISM 1965–67

Introduction

Revolutionary internationalism was fundamental to Ernesto Che Guevara's political perspective, first conceived of in terms of Latin America and later, after he had acquired more experience in the struggle, of the entire Third World.

In 1965 Che led a group of Cuban internationalists to aid the liberation struggle in Africa in the aftermath of the CIA's assassination of the Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba. In the Congo Che reaffirmed the principle of armed struggle and, despite the obstacles, he was convinced that the decision to commence fighting in Latin America should not be delayed, since the continent presented the best conditions for success. In fact, conditions were already being prepared to initiate the guerrilla movement in Bolivia.

In order to play this international role, Che renounced the positions he held in the Cuban government. Bolivia was seen by Che Guevara and the Cuban leadership as the key to extending the struggle on a continental scale.

This involved great sacrifice and extraordinary bravery on the part of the small group of Cuban and Bolivian combatants, who, along with Che, fought with determination to kick-start the revolutionary movement, a struggle in which Che, through his example and his ethics, became an important figure in the history of the Americas.

Congo Diary

The following is an excerpt from the epilogue to Che's *Congo Diary*,[1] which, like his diary of the revolutionary war in Cuba's Sierra Maestra, he had the opportunity to revise while he was in Tanzania from December 1965 to March 1966. His diary opens with the blunt statement, "This is the story of a failure," but in it he draws crucial lessons for future struggles, especially in Latin America, from the positive and negative experiences of the Cuban internationalists in Africa.

Unlike Latin America, where the process of neocolonialism has developed amid violent class struggles and where the national bourgeoisie participated in the anti-imperialist struggle before its eventual capitulation, Africa presents a picture of a process planned by imperialism. Very few countries there have obtained their independence through armed struggle. On the whole, everything has happened with the smoothness of a well-oiled machine. In effect, it is only the southern cone of Africa that remains officially colonized, and the general outcry against that system is likely to bring about its rapid demise, at least in the Portuguese colonies. The Union of South Africa presents different problems.

In the African liberation struggle, the advanced stages of the process are similar to current models of a people's war. The problem is how to root it more deeply, and this is where questions arise that I am unable to answer. I would simply like to outline a few points resulting from my feeble and fragmentary experience. If the liberation struggle is to be successful in the present conditions in Africa, it is essential to update some Marxist analytical schemas.

What is the primary contradiction of the epoch? If it is between the socialist and the imperialist countries, or between the imperialist countries and their working classes, the role of the so-called Third World will be significantly reduced. But there are more and more serious reasons to believe that the primary contradiction is between the exploiting and

exploited nations. Here I cannot begin an attempt to demonstrate this point, and to show that it is not opposed to the characterization of the epoch as one of transition to socialism. It would lead us onto difficult side-roads and require a mountain of data and arguments. I will leave this as a hypothesis that has been suggested by practice.

In this case, Africa will play an active and important role in this primary contradiction. Nevertheless, if we take the Third World as a whole to be an actor in this contradiction, at this present time in history, then we can see that there are gradations between countries and continents. In summary, we can say that Latin America as a whole has reached a point at which the class struggle is intensifying and the national bourgeoisie has totally capitulated to the power of imperialism, so that in the short-term historical future, the liberation struggle will be crowned by a revolution of a socialist character.

---

1. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Congo Diary* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press), 2011.

Message to the Tricontinental: “Create two, three… many Vietnams”

This excerpt from Che Guevara’s “Message to the Tricontinental” was published in a special supplement of the magazine *Tricontinental,* April 16, 1967, when he was already leading the guerrilla movement in Bolivia. In fact, it had been written the year before, while he was engaged in the military training in Pinar del Río province of the Cubans who were to go to Bolivia.

This call to arms for the Third World is often regarded as his political testament.[1]

It is the hour of the furnace, and the light is all that can be seen.
—José Martí

The fundamental field of imperialist exploitation covers the three backward continents—Latin America, Asia and Africa. Each country has its own characteristics, but the continents, as a whole, have their own features as well.

Latin America constitutes a more or less homogeneous whole, and in almost its entire territory US monopoly capital holds absolute primacy. The puppet or—in the best of cases—weak and timid governments are unable to resist the orders of the Yankee master. The United States has reached virtually the pinnacle of its political and economic domination. There is little room left for it to advance; any change in the situation could turn into a step backward from its dominance. Its policy is to maintain its conquests. The course of action is reduced at the present time to the brutal use of force to prevent liberation movements of any kind.

Behind the slogan “We will not permit another Cuba” hides the possibility of cowardly acts of aggression they can get away with, such as the aggression against the Dominican Republic;[2] or before that, the massacre in Panama and the clear warning that Yankee troops are ready to

intervene anywhere in Latin America where a change in the established order endangers their interests. This policy enjoys almost absolute impunity. Despite its lack of credibility, the OAS is a convenient mask. The ineffectiveness of the UN borders on the ridiculous or the tragic. The armies of all the countries of Latin America are ready to intervene to crush their own people. What has been formed, in fact, is the International of Crime and Betrayal.

On the other hand, the indigenous bourgeoisies have lost all capacity to oppose imperialism—if they ever had any—and are only dragged along behind it like a caboose. There are no other alternatives: either a socialist revolution or a caricature of revolution. […]

In Latin America, the struggle is going on arms in hand in Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela and Bolivia, and the first outbreaks are already beginning in Brazil. Other centers of resistance have appeared and been extinguished. But almost all the countries of this continent are ripe for a struggle of the kind that, to be triumphant, cannot settle for anything less than the establishment of a government of a socialist nature. In this continent virtually only one language is spoken save for the exceptional case of Brazil, with whose people Spanish-speakers can communicate in view of the similarity between the two languages. There is such a similarity between the classes in these countries that they have an “international American” type of identification, much more so than in other continents. Language, customs, religion, a common master, unite them. The degree and forms of exploitation are similar in their effects for exploiters and exploited in a good number of countries of our America. And within it rebellion is ripening at an accelerated rate.

We may ask: This rebellion, how will it bear fruit? What kind of rebellion will it be? We have maintained for some time that given its similar characteristics, the struggle in Latin America will in due time acquire a continental dimension. It will be the scene of many great battles waged by humanity for its own liberation.

In the framework of this struggle of continental scope, those that are currently being carried on in an active way are only episodes. But they have already provided martyrs, who will figure in the history of the Americas as having given their necessary quota of blood for this final stage in the struggle for the full freedom of humanity. There are the names of

Commander Turcios Lima, the priest Camilo Torres, Commander Fabricio Ojeda, the Commanders Lobatón and Luis de la Puente Uceda, central figures in the revolutionary movements of Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela and Peru.

But the active mobilization of the people creates its new leaders—César Montes and Yon Sosa are raising the banner in Guatemala; Fabio Vázquez and Marulanda are doing it in Colombia; Douglas Bravo in the western part of the country and Américo Martín in El Bachiller are leading their respective fronts in Venezuela.

New outbreaks of war will appear in these and other Latin American countries, as have already occurred in Bolivia. And they will continue to grow, with all the vicissitudes involved in this dangerous occupation of the modern revolutionary. Many will die, victims of their own errors; others will fall in the difficult combat to come; new fighters and new leaders will arise in the heat of the revolutionary struggle. The people will create their fighters and their leaders along the way in the selective framework of the war itself.

The Yankee agents of repression will increase in number. Today there are advisers in all countries where armed struggle is going on. It seems that the Peruvian army, also advised and trained by the Yankees, carried out a successful attack on the revolutionaries of that country. But if the guerrilla centers are led with sufficient political and military skill, they will become practically unbeatable and will make new Yankee reinforcements necessary. In Peru itself, with tenacity and firmness, new figures, although not yet fully known, are reorganizing the guerrilla struggle.

Little by little, the obsolete weapons that suffice to repress the small armed bands will turn into modern weapons, and the groups of advisers into US combatants, until at a certain point they find themselves obliged to send growing numbers of regular troops to secure the relative stability of a power whose national puppet army is disintegrating in the face of the guerrillas' struggles.

This is the road of Vietnam. It is the road that the peoples must follow. It is the road that Latin America will follow, with the special feature that the armed groups might establish something such as coordinating committees to make the repressive tasks of Yankee imperialism more difficult and to help their own cause.

Latin America, a continent forgotten in the recent political struggles for liberation, is beginning to make itself heard through the Tricontinental in the voice of the vanguard of its peoples: the Cuban revolution. Latin America will have a much more important task: the creation of the world's second or third Vietnam, or second *and* third Vietnam.

We must definitely keep in mind that imperialism is a world system, the final stage of capitalism, and that it must be beaten in a great worldwide confrontation. The strategic objective of that struggle must be the destruction of imperialism.

The contribution that falls to us, the exploited and backward of the world, is to eliminate the foundations sustaining imperialism: our oppressed nations, from which capital, raw materials and cheap labor (both workers and technicians) are extracted, and to which new capital (tools of domination), arms and all kinds of goods are exported, sinking us into absolute dependence. The fundamental element of this strategic objective, then, will be the real liberation of the peoples, a liberation that will be the result of armed struggle in the majority of cases, and that, in Latin America, will almost unfailingly turn into a socialist revolution.

In focusing on the destruction of imperialism, it is necessary to identify its head, which is none other than the United States of North America. We must carry out a task of a general kind, the tactical aim of which is to draw the enemy out of their environment, compelling them to fight in places where their living habits clash with existing conditions. The adversary must not be underestimated; the US soldiers have technical ability and are backed by means of such magnitude as to make them formidable. What they lack essentially is the ideological motivation, which their most hated rivals of today—the Vietnamese soldiers—have to the highest degree. We will be able to triumph over this army only to the extent that we succeed in undermining its morale. And this is done by inflicting defeats on it and causing it repeated suffering.

This brief outline for victories, however, entails immense sacrifices by the peoples—sacrifices that must be demanded starting right now, in the light of day, and that perhaps will be less painful than those they would have to endure if we constantly avoided battle in an effort to get others to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for us.

Clearly, the last country to free itself very probably will do so without an armed struggle, and its people will be spared the suffering of a long war as cruel as imperialist wars are. But it may be impossible to avoid this struggle or its effects in a conflict of worldwide character, and that country might still suffer the same or even more. We cannot predict the future, but we must never give way to the cowardly temptation to be the standard-bearers of a people who yearn for freedom but renounce the struggle that goes with it, and who wait as if expecting it to come as a crumb of victory.

It is absolutely correct to avoid any needless sacrifice. That is why it is so important to be clear on the real possibilities that dependent Latin America has to free itself in a peaceful way. For us the answer to this question is clear: now may or may not be the right moment to start the struggle, but we can have no illusions, nor do we have a right to believe, that freedom can be won without a fight.

Moreover, the battles will not be mere street fights with stones against tear gas, or peaceful general strikes. Nor will it be the struggle of an infuriated people that destroys the repressive apparatus of the ruling oligarchies in two or three days. It will be a long, bloody struggle in which the battlefronts will be in guerrilla refuges in the cities, in the homes of the combatants (where the repression will go seeking easy victims among their families), among the massacred peasant population, in the towns or cities destroyed by the enemy's bombs. We are being pushed into this struggle. It cannot be remedied other than by preparing for it and deciding to undertake it. […]

How close and bright would the future appear if two, three, many Vietnams flowered on the face of the globe, with their quota of death and their immense tragedies, with their daily heroism, with their repeated blows against imperialism, forcing it to disperse its forces under the lash of the growing hatred of the peoples of the world.

And if we were all capable of uniting in order to give our blows greater strength and certainty, so that the aid of all kinds to the peoples in struggle was even more effective—how great the future would be, and how near!

If we, on a small point on the map of the world, fulfill our duty and place at the disposal of the struggle whatever little we are able to give—our lives, our sacrifice—it can happen that one of these days we will draw our last breath on a bit of earth not our own, yet already ours, watered with our

blood. Let it be known that we have measured the scope of our actions and that we consider ourselves no more than a part of the great army of the proletariat. But we feel proud at having learned from the Cuban revolution and from its central leader the great lesson to be drawn from its position in this part of the world: “Of what difference are the dangers to a human being or a people, or the sacrifices they make, when what is at stake is the destiny of humanity?”

Our every action is a battle cry against imperialism and a call for the unity of the peoples against the great enemy of the human race: the United States of North America.

Wherever death may surprise us, let it be welcome if our battle cry has reached even one receptive ear, if another hand reaches out to take up our arms, and others come forward to join in our funeral dirge with the rattling of machine guns and with new cries of battle and victory.

---

1. “Message to the Tricontinental” is published in full in Ernesto Che Guevara, *Che Guevara Reader*, pp. 350-62.
2. In April 1965 tens of thousands of US troops invated the Dominican Republic to crush a popular uprising.

Bolivian Diary

These excerpts are taken from Che Guevara's final diary, his diary of the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia.[1] The notebooks found in his backpack were seized when Che was wounded in battle and captured by the Bolivian army on October 8, 1967. Che was assassinated the following day on the instructions of the CIA.

The first entry of the diary is November 7, 1966, three days after Che arrived in Bolivia and the day he arrived at the first guerrilla base camp at a farm on the Ñacahuazú River. His last entry is October 7, 1967, the day before his capture. Although generally written in Che's characteristic concise style, the diary—especially the monthly summaries—is invaluable for anyone seeking to understand the recent history of Latin America.

This selection includes Che's comments on events as they unfolded and some of the problems, such as the conflicts with the leaders of the Bolivian Communist Party (especially Mario Monje, its general secretary), whom Che called traitors; he is also critical of public statements made by Régis Debray (referred to as "the Frenchman" in the diary) and Ciro Bustos ("Pelao, the Argentine"); and he makes references to the disrespectful statements made by Czechoslovaks and Hungarians, who described Che as a "Bakunin" and "irresponsible," reflecting the dispute between the pro-Moscow communist parties and those advocating armed struggle.

November 28 [1966]

[…] In the afternoon, I met with the Bolivian group to discuss the Peruvian offer to send 20 men; everyone agreed they should be sent, but after the action had begun.

Analysis of the month [November]

Everything has gone quite well; my arrival [in Bolivia] was without incident; half the troops have arrived, also without incident, although they were somewhat delayed; Ricardo's main collaborators are joining the struggle, come what may. The general outlook seems good in this remote region and everything indicates that we could be here for practically as long as necessary. The plans are: to wait for the rest of the troops, increase the number of Bolivian [combatants] to at least 20, and then commence

operations. We still need to see how Monje[2] reacts and how Guevara's[3] people conduct themselves.

December 2

Chino[4] arrived early, quite effusive. We spent the day chatting. The substance is: he will go to Cuba to inform them in person of the situation, and that five Peruvians can join us in two months, after we see some action. Two will come now to stay for a while: a radio technician[5] and a doctor.[6] Chino asked for weapons and I agreed to give him a BZ, some Mausers, and grenades; and I will purchase an M-1 for them. I also decided to assist them in sending five Peruvians, who would establish the necessary connections for sending arms to a region near Puno, on the other side of [Lake] Titicaca. He told me about his troubles in Peru, including a daring plan to free Calixto,[7] which seems unrealistic to me. He thinks that some survivors of the guerrilla movement are active in that area, but he is not certain because no one has been able to make it there to see.

The rest of the conversation was anecdotes. He said goodbye with the same enthusiasm he had when he arrived; he took some of our photos with him to La Paz. Coco[8] has been instructed to organize the contacts with Sánchez[9] (whom I will see later) and to contact the head of the president's information office, who is Inti's[10] brother-in-law and who has offered to help. The network is still in its infancy.

December 4

Uneventful. Everyone is quiet since it is Sunday. I give a little talk about our approach to the Bolivians who will be coming and about the war.

December 7

Today, in fact, completes our first month here, but for the sake of convenience I will give the summaries at the end of each month.

December 12

I spoke to the whole group, taking them to task about the reality of war. I emphasized the importance of a united command and discipline, and I warned the Bolivians of the responsibility they would bear in violating the discipline of the party's line by adopting another one. I made the following assignments: Joaquín[11] as military second in command; Rolando[12] and Inti as political commissars; Alejandro[13] as head of operations; Pombo,[14] services; Inti, finances; Ñato,[15] provisions and armaments; and Moro,[16] medical services, for the moment. […]

December 20

[…] A telegram came from Manila [Cuba] indicating that Monje will be coming from the south.

They set up a contact system, but I was not satisfied because it shows how truly suspicious of Monje his compañeros are.

[…] Iván[17] has the opportunity to do some business but his poorly forged passport is preventing him; the next step is to improve the document and write to our friends in Manila to expedite it.

Tania[18] will come soon to receive instructions; I will probably send her to Buenos Aires. […]

December 31

[…] The conversation with Monje began with generalities but came down to his fundamental position, summarized by three basic conditions:

1) He will resign from the leadership of the party, but he will at least ensure it remains neutral and he will recruit cadres for the struggle.

2) He will head the political-military struggle for as long as the revolution is taking place in Bolivian territory.

3) He will handle relations with other South American parties, and try to convince them to support liberation movements. (He used Douglas Bravo as an example.)

I responded, saying that the first point was up to him, as secretary of the party, although I considered his position to be a grave error.

It was vacillating and compromising and protected those who should be condemned by history for abandoning their principles. Time will prove me right.

Concerning the third point, I had no objections to his attempting this, but it was doomed to fail. To ask Codovila[19] to support Douglas Bravo was like asking him to condone an uprising in his own party. Time will be the judge here too.

On the second point, there was no way I could accept his proposal. I had to be military chief and would not accept any ambiguity on this. Here the discussion got stuck and went around and around in a vicious circle.

We left it that Monje would think it over and talk to his Bolivian compañeros. We moved on to the new camp and there he spoke with everyone, presenting the ultimatum that they could either stay or support the party; everyone opted to stay, which he seemed to take quite hard.

At 12:00, we made a toast, pointing out the historical importance of this date. I replied, taking advantage of his words and marking this moment as the new Cry of Murillo[20] of the revolution on this continent, saying that our lives meant nothing when faced with the fact of the revolution.

Analysis of the month [December 1966]

The team of Cubans has been successfully completed; morale is good and there are only minor problems. The Bolivians are doing well, although few in number. Monje's attitude can delay the development on the one hand, but on the other, can free me from political constraints. Apart from waiting for more Bolivians, the next steps are to speak with [Moisés] Guevara and with the Argentines Mauricio[21] and Jozami[22] (Masetti[23] and the dissident party).

January 1 [1967]

In the morning, with no further discussion, Monje informed me that he was leaving and would present his resignation to the party leadership on January 8. According to him, his mission was over. He left looking like he was being led away to the gallows. My impression was that when Coco told him

that I would not budge on strategic matters, he held onto this point to force the break, because his arguments are inconsistent.

In the afternoon, I brought everyone together to explain Monje's position and to announce that we would unite with all those who want to make the revolution happen. I predicted difficult times ahead and days of moral anguish for the Bolivians, and that we would try to solve problems through collective discussions or through the commissars.

I worked out the details of Tania's trip to Argentina to speak with Mauricio and Jozami and to bring them back. […]

January 2

[…] The others (Sánchez, Coco, and Tania) left in the afternoon when Fidel's speech was over. He talked about us in a way that makes us feel even more committed, if that is possible. […]

January 6

[…] After the class, I launched into a little tirade about the qualities required of a guerrilla force and the need for greater discipline; I explained that our mission, above all else, was to become a model nucleus, one of steel. I explained the importance of study as indispensable for the future. […]

January 15

I stayed at the camp, drawing up some instructions for the cadres in the city. […]

January 21

[…] Mario Monje spoke to three others coming from Cuba, dissuading them from joining the guerrillas. Not only did he not resign from the party leadership, but he also sent a document to Fidel, attachment D. IV. I received a note from Tania about her departure and Iván's illness, and another note from Iván, which is attachment D. V. […]

January 22

[…] I wrote instructions for the urban cadres (Document III). […][24]

January 25

[…] Manila [Cuba] sent a message reporting that everything had been received and that Kolle[25] will go to where Simón Reyes[26] is already waiting. Fidel said he would hear them out, but will be hard on them.

Analysis of the month [January 1967]

As I expected, Monje's position was at first evasive and then treacherous.

The party has taken up arms against us and I do not know where this will lead, but it will not stop us and maybe, in the end, it will be to our advantage (I am almost certain of this). The most honest and militant people will be with us, although they are going through a more or less severe crisis of conscience.

Up to now, Guevara has responded well; we will see how he and his people act in the future.

Tania departed, but the Argentines[27] have shown no sign of life and neither has she. Now the real guerrilla phase begins and we will test the troops; time will tell what they can do and what the prospects for the Bolivian revolution are.

Of everything that was envisioned, the slowest has been the incorporation of Bolivian combatants.

February 14

[…] We decoded a long message from Havana, the main news being about the meeting with Kolle, who claimed he had not been informed our undertaking was on a continental scale and, if this was the case, they were ready to collaborate in a plan and wanted to discuss details with me; Kolle himself, Simón Rodríguez,[28] and Ramírez[29] will come here. The message also stated that Simón had declared his decision to help us independently of what the party decides.

Besides this, there is news that the Frenchman,[30] traveling with his own passport, will arrive in La Paz on the 23rd, and will stay with either

Pareja[31] or Rhea.[32] Part of the message has yet to be decoded. We will see how to deal with this new conciliatory offensive. Other news is that Merci[33] turned up with no money, claiming it was stolen; misappropriation is suspected, although something more serious cannot be ruled out. Lechín[34] is going to ask for money and training.

Analysis of the month [February 1967]

[…] From the outside, there is no news of the two men who should have arrived to complete the group; the Frenchman should be in La Paz by now and should come to the camp any day. I have no news of the Argentines or Chino. Messages are being communicated well in both directions. The party's position remains vacillating and two-faced, to say the very least, although when I speak with the new delegation and hear the latest explanation, this will be clearer.

The march has been going well enough, although it has been seriously affected by the accident that cost Benjamín[35] his life. The men are still weak and not all of the Bolivians are able to hold up; the last few days of hunger have dampened their enthusiasm, which was already obvious after the group was divided.

Of the Cubans, two of those with little experience, Pacho[36] and Rubio,[37] have not responded well. Alejandro has done extremely well; of the old timers, Marcos[38] is a constant headache and Ricardo[39] is not up to speed. The rest are doing well. The next phase will be combat, and that will be decisive.

March 21

I spent the day in talks and discussions with Chino, going over some points, and with the Frenchman, Pelao, and Tania. The Frenchman brought news we had already heard about Monje, Kolle, Simón Reyes, etc. He came to stay, but I asked him to go back and organize a support network in France, stopping first in Cuba, which coincides with his desire to get married and to have a child with his compañera. I must write letters to [Jean-Paul] Sartre and B[ertrand]. Russell so they can organize international support for the

Bolivian liberation movement. He should also talk to a friend who will organize all channels of support, fundamentally financial, medical, and electronic—the latter in the form of an electrical engineer and equipment.

Pelao, of course, is ready to receive my orders and I proposed to him that he act as a kind of a coordinator, working for now only with the groups led by Jozami, Gelman,[40] and Stamponi,[41] and sending me five men to begin training. He is to send my greetings to María Rosa Oliver[42] and the old man.[43] I will give him 500 pesos to send off and 1,000 to get around with. If they accept, they should begin exploratory activities in northern Argentina and send me a report.

Tania made her contacts and the people came, but, according to her, she had to drive them here in a jeep, and although she intended to stay only one day, things got complicated. Jozami could not stay the first time, and the second time no contact was made because Tania was here. […]

March 25

[…] At 18:30 with nearly all personnel present, I made an analysis of our expedition and its significance, reviewing Marcos's errors and demoting him, and then named Miguel[44] as head of the vanguard. At the same time I announced the discharge of Paco,[45] Pepe,[46] Chingolo,[47] and Eusebio,[48] telling them that they would not eat if they do not work; I suspended their tobacco ration and redistributed their personal things among other compañeros more in need. I referred to Kolle's plan to come here and hold discussions at the same time as those members of the youth organization who are here with us are being expelled, saying that we are interested in action—words are of no importance. I announced we would look for a cow and that study classes would be resumed.

I informed Pedro[49] and El Médico [Ernesto] they have almost achieved full status as guerrilla fighters, and gave Apolinar[50] some encouragement. I criticized Wálter[51] for being too soft during the trip, for his attitude in combat, and for the fear he showed of the planes; he did not react well. I went over some details with Chino and Pelado, and gave the Frenchman a long oral report on the situation. In the course of the meeting, the group

adopted the name National Liberation Army of Bolivia, and a public statement about the meeting will be made.

March 27

[…] Communiqué No. 1 was drafted, which we will try to send to journalists in Camiri (D. XVII).[52]

March 29

A day of little action but an extraordinary amount of news: the army provides a wide range of information that, if true, could be very valuable. Radio Habana already reported the news, and the Bolivian government announced its support for Venezuela in presenting the case against Cuba before the OAS. […]

Analysis of the month [March 1967]

This month was full of events, but the general panorama is characterized as follows:

The phase of consolidation and purging of the guerrilla force—fully completed.

The phase of slow development with the incorporation of some Cuban elements, who do not seem bad, and Guevara's people, who are generally low level (two deserters, one "talking" prisoner, three cowards, and two quitters).

The initial phase of the struggle, characterized by a precise and spectacular blow, but marked by gross indecision before and after the fact (the withdrawal of Marcos, Braulio's[53] action).

The beginning of the enemy's counteroffensive, characterized to this point by a) a tendency to take measures to isolate us; b) a clamor at a national and an international level; c) total ineffectiveness, so far; and d) mobilization of peasants.

Evidently, we will have to hit the road before I expected and move on, leaving a group to recover, saddled with the burden of four possible informers.

The situation is not good, but now begins a new testing phase for the guerrilla force that will be of great benefit once surpassed. […]

April 13

[…] The announcement by the North Americans that they are sending advisers to Bolivia corresponds to an old plan and has nothing to do with the guerrillas. Perhaps we are witnessing the first episode of a new Vietnam.

April 14

[…] Communiqué No. 2 was written for the Bolivian people.[54]

April 29

[…] After a long delay, we completely decoded Message No. 35, which had a paragraph asking for me to add my signature to a call in support of Vietnam, organized by Bertrand Russell.

April 30

[…] Radio Habana broadcast a report from Chilean journalists stating that the guerrillas are so strong that they can threaten cities and that they recently captured two military trucks full of supplies. The magazine *Siempre* interviewed Barrientos who, among other things, admitted that he had Yankee military advisers and that the guerrilla movement arose due to the social conditions in Bolivia.

Analysis of the month [April 1967]

[…] Of the points on military strategy noted above, we can emphasize:

a) The measures taken to control us have not been very effective to date, and while they bother us, they allow us some movement, given the army's weakness and lack of mobility; besides, after the last ambush against the dogs and the trainer, we can presume they will be more careful when entering the woods.

b) The clamor continues, but now from both sides; after the publication of my article in Havana,[55] there can be no doubt about my presence here.

   It seems certain that the North Americans will intervene heavily here, having already sent helicopters and apparently the Green Berets, although they have not been seen around here.

c) The army (at least one or two companies) has improved its technique; they surprised us at Taperillas and were not demoralized at El Mesón.

d) The mobilization of peasants is nonexistent, except as informers, which is somewhat troublesome; but they are neither quick nor efficient, and of no consequence.

Chino's status has changed and he will be a combatant until the second or third front is established. Dantón and Carlos[56] were victims of their own haste, almost desperation, to leave and of my lack of energy to stop them; now communication with Cuba is cut off (Dantón) and the plan of action for Argentina (Carlos) is lost.

In summary: A month in which all has developed normally, considering the inevitable contingencies of a guerrilla force. Morale is good among all the combatants who have had their preliminary test as guerrilla fighters.

May 1

[Juan] Almeida spoke in Havana, applauding the famous Bolivian guerrillas and me. The speech was rather long but good. […]

May 13

All the radio stations are constantly covering news that some Cubans landing in Venezuela were intercepted. The Leoni[57] government presented two of the men with their names and ranks; I do not know them, but everything suggests that something has gone wrong.

Analysis of the month [May 1967]

[…] The most important features are:

1) A total loss of contact with Manila, La Paz, and Joaquín, which reduces the number of our group to 25.

2) A complete failure to recruit peasants, although they are losing their fear of us and we are gaining their admiration. It is a slow and patient task.

3) The party, through Kolle, offers its collaboration, apparently without reservation.

4) The clamor surrounding Debray's case has given more momentum to our movement than 10 victories in battle could have.

5) The morale of the guerrilla movement is growing stronger and, if handled well, will certainly guarantee success.

6) The army remains disorganized and its technique has not significantly improved.

News of the month: The arrest and escape of Loro,[58] who now should be rejoining us or heading to La Paz to make contact.

The army reported the arrest of all the peasants who collaborated with us in the Masicuri area; now comes the stage in which the peasants will be afraid of both sides, although in different ways; our triumph will signify the qualitative change necessary for their leap in development.

June 12

[…] The radio broadcast some interesting news: the newspaper *Presencia* announced one dead and one wounded for the army from Saturday's clash; this is great and almost certainly true, and means that we have maintained our pattern of clashes resulting in casualties. Another report announced three dead, among them Inti, one of the guerrilla leaders, and noted the

foreign components of the guerrilla force: 17 Cubans, 14 Brazilians, four Argentines, and three Peruvians. The Cuban and the Peruvian count is true; we will have to find out where they got this information.

June 13

[…] The political upheaval in this country is fascinating—the incredible number of pacts and counter-pacts that are in the air. Rarely has the potential for a guerrilla catalyst been so clear.

June 14

[…] I turned 39 [today] and am inevitably approaching the age when I need to consider my future as a guerrilla, but for now I am still "in one piece."

June 21

Paulino[59] promised to take my message to Cochabamba. We will give him a letter for Inti's wife, a coded message for Manila, and four communiqués. The fourth outlines the composition of our guerrilla force and clears up the rumor about Inti's death; it is the *[blank in the original]*. We will see if we can now establish contact with the city. […]

June 25

[…] An Argentine radio station broadcast the news of 87 victims at the mining area of Siglo XX […]

June 30

[…] In the political arena, the most important development is the official announcement by Ovando[60] that I am here. Moreover, he said that the army is facing a perfectly trained guerrilla force that includes the Vietcong commanders who have defeated the best US regiments. His information is based on statements made by Debray who apparently talked more than was necessary, although we cannot tell what implications this has, or what the circumstances were under which he talked. It is also rumored that Loro was murdered. They attribute to me a plan for insurrection in the mines, to

coincide with the one in Ñacahuazú. Things are turning out beautifully, so very shortly, I will no longer be “Fernando Sacamuelas” [Tooth-puller].

A message was received from Cuba reporting on the low level of development of the guerrilla movement in Peru, where they scarcely have any men or weapons, but have spent a fortune and are talking of a supposed guerrilla force involving Paz Estenssoro, a colonel Seoane, and a certain Rubén Julio, a very rich man belonging to the movement in the Panda region; this will take place in Guayaramerin. […]

Analysis of the month [June 1967]

[…] The most important features are:

1) Continued total lack of contact, which reduces us now to 24 men, with Pombo wounded and with reduced mobility.

2) Continued lack of peasant recruitment. It is a vicious circle: to recruit we need to maintain constant activity in populated territory, and to do this we need more people.

3) The legend of the guerrilla force is growing like wildfire, now we are invincible superhumans.

4) The lack of contact extends to the party, although we have made an attempt through Paulino that could bring results.

5) Debray is still in the news but now he is linked with my case, and I have been identified as the leader of the movement. We will see the result of this move by the government and if it is positive or negative for us.

6) The morale of the guerrilla fighters continues to be strong and their commitment to the struggle is increasing. All the Cubans are exemplary in combat and there are only two or three weak Bolivians.

7) The army continues to be useless in its military tactics, but is doing work among the peasants that we cannot ignore, transforming all

members of the community into informers, either through fear or by fooling them about our goals.

8) The massacre in the mines greatly improves our outlook; if we can get our statement circulated, it will be a great clarifying factor.

Our most urgent task is to reestablish contact with La Paz, to replenish our military and medical supplies, and to recruit 50 to 100 men from the city, even if the number of active combatants comes to only 10 or 25.

July 1

[…] Barrientos held a press conference in which he acknowledged my presence, but predicted that in a few days I would be wiped out. He spoke his usual stream of nonsense, calling us rats and snakes and repeated his intention to punish Debray. […]

July 10

[…] [T]he statements from Debray and Pelado are not good; on top of everything, they have admitted to the continental aims of the guerrilla movement, something they did not have to do.

July 14

[…] The PRA [Revolutionary Authentic Party] and PSB [Bolivian Social Democratic Party] have withdrawn from the Revolutionary Front[61] and the peasants are warning Barrientos about an alliance with the Falange.[62] The government is disintegrating rapidly. Such a pity that we do not have 100 more men right now.

July 19

[...] The political news is of a tremendous crisis and no one knows how it will be resolved. For now, the agricultural unions in Cochabamba have formed a political party of “Christian inspiration” that is backing Barrientos, who is asking to be “allowed to govern for four years”; it is almost a plea. [Vice-President] Siles Salinas is threatening the opposition

that our rise to power would cost everyone's head and is calling for national unity, declaring the country to be in a state of war. On the one hand, they seem to be pleading, and using demagogy, on the other; maybe they are planning a takeover.

July 24

[…] We are trying to decode a long message from Manila. Raúl [Castro] spoke at a graduation ceremony for officers at the Máximo Gómez School; among other things, he refuted criticisms the Czechs made about my article on Vietnam. Our friends are calling me a new Bakunin and are sorry about blood that has been spilled and blood that would be spilled if there were three or four Vietnams.

July 26

[…] In the evening I gave a little talk about the significance of July 26, the rebellion against oligarchies and against revolutionary dogmas. Fidel made a brief mention of Bolivia.

Analysis of the month [July 1967]

[…] The most important features are:

1) Total loss of contact continues.

2) Continued sense of the lack of peasant recruitment, although there are some encouraging signs in the reception from peasants whom we have known for a while.

3) The legend of the guerrilla force is acquiring continental dimensions; Onganía[63] is closing the borders and Peru is taking precautions.

4) The attempt at contact through Paulino failed.

5) The morale and combat experience of the guerrilla fighters is increasing with each battle; Camba[64] and Chapaco[65] remain the weak ones.

6) The army continues to be ineffective, but there are units that appear to be more combative.

7 The political crisis of the government is growing, but the United States is giving small loans, which are of great assistance in tempering the level of Bolivian discontent.

The most urgent tasks are: To reestablish contact, to recruit combatants, and to obtain medicines.

August 8

[…] I gathered everyone together tonight to make the following speech: We are in a difficult situation; Pacho is recuperating, but I am a complete wreck and the incident with the little mare shows that at times I am beginning to lose control; this will be corrected, but we are all in this together and anyone who does not feel up to it should say so. This is one of those moments when great decisions have to be made; this type of struggle gives us the opportunity to become revolutionaries, the highest form of the human species, and it also allows us to emerge fully as men; those who are unable to achieve either of those two states should say so now and abandon the struggle. All the Cubans and some of the Bolivians committed themselves to stay until the end. […]

August 10

[…] Fidel made a long speech in which he attacks the traditional parties, especially, the Venezuelan party; it appears there was a big behind-the-scenes row. […]

August 14

A bad day. It was dreary as we carried out our daily activities without incident, but at night the news bulletin reported in precise detail that the cave where the men were sent had been discovered, so there can be no doubt. I am now condemned to suffer from asthma indefinitely. They also seized all kinds of documents and photographs. This is the worst blow they have delivered; someone must have talked. Who? That is the question.

Analysis of the month [August 1967]

The most important features are:

1) We continue without contact of any kind and have no reasonable hope of establishing it in the near future.

2) We continue being unable to recruit peasants, which is logical considering how few dealings we have had with them recently.

3) There is a decline in combat morale; temporary, I hope.

4) The army has not increased its effectiveness or its aggressiveness.

We are at a low point in our morale and in our revolutionary legend. The most urgent tasks are the same as last month, notably: to reestablish contact, to recruit combatants, and to obtain medicine and supplies.

It must be recognized that Inti and Coco are becoming more and more outstanding as revolutionary and military cadres.

September 5

We decoded the entire report that stated that OLAS [Organization of Latin American Solidarity] was a triumph, but the Bolivian delegation was shit; Aldo Flores of the PCB [Bolivian Communist Party] pretended to represent the ELN [National Liberation Army] so they had to show he was lying. They have requested that one of Kolle's men come to discuss matters; Lozano's[66] house was raided and he is now underground; they think that they can make an exchange for Debray. That is all; evidently they have not received our last message.

September 8

[…] A Budapest daily is criticizing Che Guevara, a pathetic and apparently irresponsible figure, and applauds the Marxist stand of the Chilean Party for taking a pragmatic position when faced with reality. How I would like to have power, for nothing more than to expose cowards and lackeys of all stripes and to rub their snouts in their own filth.

September 30

Another day of tension. In the morning, Radio Balmaseda of Chile announced that highly placed sources in the army announced Che Guevara is cornered in a canyon in the jungle. The local stations are silent; this could be a betrayal and they are convinced about our presence in the area. In a while, the soldiers began moving back and forth. […]

Analysis of the month [September 1967]

It should have been a month of recuperation, and almost was, but the ambush in which Miguel, Coco, and Julio[67] were killed ruined everything, and left us in a perilous position, losing León[68] as well; losing Camba is a net gain.

We have had several small skirmishes: one in which we killed a horse; another in which we killed one soldier and wounded another; one where Urbano[69] had a shoot-out with a patrol; and the disastrous ambush at La Higuera. Now we have abandoned the mules and I believe it will be a long time before we have animals like that again, unless I fall into another bad state of asthma.

On the other hand, there may be truth to the various reports about fatalities in the other [Joaquín's] group, so we must consider them wiped out, although it is still possible there is a small group wandering around, avoiding contact with the army, because the news of the death of seven people at once might well be false, or at least, exaggerated.

The features are the same as last month, except that now the army is demonstrating more effectiveness in action and the peasant masses are not helping us with anything and are becoming informers.

The most important task is to escape and seek more favorable areas; then focus on contacts, despite the fact that our urban network in La Paz is in a shambles, where we have also been hit hard. The morale of the rest of the troops has remained fairly high, and I only have doubts about Willy,[70] who might take advantage of some commotion to escape, if he is not spoken to first.

October 7

The 11-month anniversary of our establishment as a guerrilla force passed in a bucolic mood, with no complications, until 12:30 when an old woman tending her goats entered the canyon where we had camped and we had to take her prisoner. The woman gave us no reliable information about the soldiers, saying that she knew nothing because it had been a while since she had been over there. She only gave us information about trails, from which we conclude we are approximately one league from La Higuera, another from Jagüey, and about two more from Pucará. At 17:30, Inti, Aniceto[71] and Pablito[72] went to the old woman's house; she has one daughter who is bedridden and the other is almost a dwarf. They gave her 50 pesos with instructions to not say a word, but we have little hope she will stick to her promise.

The 17 of us set out under a sliver of a moon; the march was exhausting and we left tracks in the canyon we walked through; there were no nearby houses, but there were potato seedbeds irrigated by ditches from the same creek. We stopped to rest at 2:00 because it was futile to continue. Chino becomes a real burden when we have to walk at night.

The army issued an odd report about the presence of 250 men in Serrano to block the escape of the 37 [guerrillas] that are said to be surrounded. Our refuge is supposedly between the Acero and Oro rivers.

The report seems to be diversionary.[73]

---

1. Ernesto Che Guevara, *The Bolivian Diary* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press), 2006.
2. Mario Monje Molina, leader of the Bolivian Communist Party.
3. Moisés Guevara Rodríguez (*Guevara or Moisés*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla forces in March 1967, and was killed in the ambush at Vado del Yeso on August 31, 1967.
4. Juan Pablo Chang-Navarro Lévano (*Chino*). Peruvian. He met with Che in December 1966 and was integrated into the guerrilla struggle from March 1967. He was captured and taken alive to La Higuera, where he was murdered along with Che on October 9, 1967.
5. Lucio Edilberto Galván Hidalgo (*Eustaquio*). Peruvian. Born in the city of Huancayo, Peru in 1937. He was a member of the Peruvian ELN and joined the guerrilla forces, together with Negro and Chino, in March 1967. He was killed in combat in Cajones, at the fork of the Río Grande and Mizque rivers on October 14, 1967.
6. Restituto José Cabrera Flores (*Negro or Médico*). Peruvian. On August 31, 1967, during the ambush at Vado del Yeso, he attempted to escape along the river, but was captured and brutally murdered on September 4 on the Palmarito River.

7. A reference to Héctor Béjar Rivera, the leader of the National Liberation Army in Peru, who had been arrested and imprisoned.
8. Roberto Peredo Leigue (*Coco*). Bolivian. He was involved in all the preparations of the guerrilla organization from its beginnings and posed as the owner of the Ñacahuazú farm, which served as the first base camp for the guerrillas. He was part of the vanguard detachment and was killed in an ambush at Quebrada del Batán, near La Higuera, on September 26, 1967.
9. A reference to Peruvian journalist Julio Dagnino Pacheco (*Sánchez*), who served in La Paz as a liason for the National Liberation Army of Peru.
10. Guido Álvaro Peredo Leigue (*Inti*). Bolivian. Joined the guerrilla forces on November 27, 1966. He was killed by the repressive forces in La Paz on September 9, 1969.
11. Juan Vitalio Acuña Núñez (*Joaquín* or *Vilo*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces on November 27, 1966, and commanded the rearguard detachment. He was killed on August 31, 1967, in the ambush at Vado de Puerto Mauricio, on the Río Grande River.
12. Eliseo Reyes Rodríguez (*Rolando or Luis*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces on November 20, 1966, and was appointed by Che to the post of political commissar. He was killed on April 25, 1967, in the battle of El Mesón, located between the village of Ticucha and the Iquira River.
13. Gustavo Machín Hoed de Beche (*Alejandro*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces in November 1966 and was appointed by Che as chief of operations. He was killed at Vado del Yeso on August 31, 1967.
14. Harry Villegas Tamayo (*Pombo*). Cuban. Companion of Che since the Sierra Maestra and the mission in the Congo (1965). He arrived in Bolivia in July 1966 and was in charge of the guerrilla force's final military preparations. He survived the battle at Quebrada del Yuro, and along with Inti, Darío, Benigno, and Urbano, was able to break through the encirclement. The three Cuban survivors reached the Chilean border and arrived back in Cuba on March 6, 1968.
15. Julio César Méndez Korne (*Ñato*). Bolivian. He was one of the first guerrilla combatants and functioned as head of supplies and weapons. He was one of the 10 survivors of the battle at Quebrada del Yuro, but, after the encirclement had been broken, was killed in the final military action on November 15, 1967.
16. Octavio de la Concepción de la Pedraja (*Moro, Morogoro, Muganga* or *Médico*). Cuban. He arrived at the Ñacahuazú farm on December 11, 1966, as a doctor and combatant. He died in combat in the region of Cajones, at the junction of the Río Grande and Mizque rivers, on October 12, 1967.
17. Iván Montero (*Renán*). Cuban. One of the contacts of the urban network in Bolivia.
18. Haydée Tamara Bunke Bider (*Tania*). Argentine-German. She remained in the guerrilla forces after her visit in March 1967 and was incorporated into the rearguard on April 17, 1967. She was killed in the Vado del Yeso ambush on August 31, 1967, and her body was found seven days later next to the river.
19. Victorio Codovila. Argentine. He was first secretary of the Argentine Communist Party.
20. Pedro Domingo Murillo was a Bolivian patriot who led the first struggle for independence from Spain in 1809.
21. Ciro Bustos (*Mauricio, el Pelao* or *Carlos*). An Argentine artist.
22. Eduardo Jozami. Former member of the Argentine Communist Party. Journalist and lawyer.
23. Jorge Ricardo Masetti. Argentine journalist. The founder and first director of Prensa Latina, Masetti died in combat in the north of Argentina in 1964.
24. See later in this anthology: Documents from Bolivia.
25. Jorge Kolle Cueto (*Kolle* or *Kolly*). A leader of the Bolivian Communist Party.
26. Simón Reyes was a leader of the Bolivian Communist Party.
27. Ciro Bustos and Eduardo Jozami.
28. Refers to Simón Reyes.

29. Humberto Ramírez, a leader in the Bolivian Communist Party.
30. Jules Régis Debray, referred to in Che's diary as *the Frenchman, Dantón, Debré* or *Debray*.
31. Dr. Wálter Pareja Fernández. Collaborator with the urban underground movement.
32. Collaborator with the urban underground movement in Bolivia.
33. Carlos Alvarado (*Merci*). Guatemalan. Later the truth of this story and his loyalty to the Latin American revolution were proved beyond doubt.
34. Juan Lechín Oquendo was a key leader of the Bolivian Workers Confederation.
35. Benjamín Coronado Córdoba (*Benjamín*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla movement on January 21, 1967. He drowned when crossing the Río Grande on February 26, 1967.
36. Alberto Fernández Montes de Oca (*Pacho* or *Pachungo*). Cuban. He arrived with Che in La Paz on November 3, 1966. He was killed on October 9 at Quebrada del Yuro.
37. Jesús Suárez Gayol (*Félix* or *Rubio*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces on December 19, 1966, and died in combat on April 10, 1967 during an action in Iripití.
38. Antonio Sánchez Díaz (*Marcos* or *Pinares*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces on November 20, 1966. He was killed in an ambush on June 2, 1967, in the Bella Vista region.
39. José María Martínez Tamayo (*Ricardo, Chinche* or *Papí*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces on November 27, 1966. He was seriously wounded on July 30, 1967, and died shortly afterwards while being cared for by his compañeros.
40. Juan Gelman. Argentine writer and revolutionary.
41. Luis Faustino Stamponi Corinaldesi. Argentine revolutionary.
42. María Rosa Oliver was an Argentine writer.
43. A reference to Che's father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch.
44. Manuel Hernández Osorio (*Miguel* or *Manuel*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces on November 27, 1966, and was killed at Quebrada del Batán, close to La Higuera, on September 26, 1967.
45. José Castillo Chávez (*Paco*). Bolivian.
46. Julio Velazco Montaño (*Pepe*). Bolivian.
47. Hugo Choque Silva (*Chingolo*). Bolivian.
48. Eusebio Tapia Aruni (*Eusebio*). Bolivian.
49. Antonio Jiménez Tardío (*Pedro* or *Pan Divino*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla struggle at the end of 1966 and died fighting in the Iñaó mountains on August 9, 1967.
50. Apolinar Aquino Quispe (*Apolinar, Apolinario* or *Polo*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla struggle as a combatant in December 1966. He was killed in the ambush at Puerto Mauricio on August 31, 1967.
51. Wálter Arancibia Ayala (*Walter*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla forces on January 21, 1967, and was killed in the ambush at Puerto Mauricio on August 31, 1967.
52. Included at the end of this selection from Che's diary.
53. Israel Reyes Zayas (*Braulio*). Cuban. He joined the guerrilla forces in Bolivia on November 27, 1966. He was killed in the ambush at at Puerto Mauricio on August 31, 1967.
54. Included at the end of this selection from Che's diary.
55. A reference to Che's *Message to the Tricontinental*.
56. Lorgio Vaca Marchetti (*Carlos*). He joined the guerrilla struggle on December 11, 1966, and drowned on March 16, 1967, while trying to cross the Río Grande.
57. Raúl Leoni, president of Venezuela (1964–69).
58. Jorge Vázquez Viaña (*Bigotes, el Loro* or *Jorge*). Bolivian. Following the action at the Coripote farm, near Taperillas, on April 22, 1967, he became isolated and lost. He was involved in a clash with the Bolivian Army, inflicting two fatalities, and finally was wounded and captured on April 29. He was taken to the hospital at Camiri where he was interrogated by top military officials and CIA

agents. A month later, it was announced that he had escaped and he was tried in absentia together with Régis Debray and Ciro Bustos; by this time, however, rumors were already circulating that he had been killed.

59. Paulino Baigorria. A peasant who served as a liaison for the guerrilla force and asked to join their ranks. While fulfilling the mission assigned by Che, he was detained in Comarapa, held incommunicado, and tortured.

60. Alfredo Ovando Candia. Commander in chief of the Bolivian Armed Forces (1966–69).

61. The Revolutionary Front was a coalition that supported Barrientos.

62. Bolivian Socialist Falange (FSB), a right-wing party.

63. Juan Carlos Onganía. Argentine soldier who overthrew Arturo Illía in 1966 and through a coup d'état, took over as president of Argentina.

64. Orlando Jiménez Bazán (*Camba*). Bolivian.

65. Jaime Arana Campero (*Chapaco* or *Luis*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla struggle in March 1967. In the battle of Quebrada del Yuro, he was able to break through the encirclement. The group of survivors advanced to Cajones, where they were gunned down on October 14, 1967.

66. Dr. Hugo Lozano. A Bolivian dentist and member of the urban network.

67. Mario Gutiérrez Ardaya (*Julio*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla movement on March 10, 1967. He was killed in the ambush at Quebrada del Batán, near La Higuera on September 26, 1967.

68. Antonio Domínguez Flores (*Antonio* or *León*). Bolivian.

69. Leonardo Tamayo Núñez (*Urbano*) joined the guerrilla forces on November 27, 1967, and survived.

70. Simeón Cuba Sanabria (*Willi, Willy, Wily* or *Wyly*). Bolivian. He arrived at the guerrilla camp in March 1967. He was executed on October 9, 1967, in the school at La Higuera.

71. Aniceto Reinaga Gordillo (*Aniceto*). Bolivian. He joined the guerrilla forces in early December 1966 and was killed in the battle of Quebrada del Yuro on October 8, 1967.

72. Francisco Huanca Flores (*Pablo* or *Pablito*). Bolivian. He died in combat at Cajones, located at the fork of the Mizque and Río Grande rivers, where he was killed on October 14, 1967.

73. This was the last entry in Che's diary.

DOCUMENTS FROM BOLIVIA

The following are communiqués issued by the National Liberation Army (ELN) of Bolivia during the period of Che Guevara's participation in the guerrilla movement in Bolivia. Except for Communiqué No. 1, which was written on March 27—as Che noted in his diary, and which was published in the May 1 edition of the Cochabamba newspaper *Prensa Libre*—none of these documents, for a variety of reasons, was ever published.

Communiqué No. 1: To the Bolivian People

Revolutionary Truth against Reactionary Lies

March 27, 1967

The military brutes who have usurped power, after killing workers and laying the groundwork for the total handover of our resources to US imperialism, are now mocking the people with a comic farce. Even as the hour of truth arrived and the masses took up arms, responding to the armed usurpers with armed struggle, they tried to continue with their lies.

On the morning of March 23, troops from the Fourth Division, quartered in Camiri, about 35-strong and led by Major Hernán Plata Ríos, penetrated guerrilla territory along the Ñacahuazú River. The entire group fell into an ambush set up by our forces. As a result of the action, we confiscated 25 weapons of all kinds, including three 60-mm mortars with a supply of shells and other ammunition and equipment.

Enemy casualties consisted of seven dead, including a lieutenant, 14 prisoners, five of them wounded in the clash and cared for by our medics to the best of our capabilities. All the prisoners were freed after explaining the aims of our movement.

The list of enemy casualties is as follows:

Dead: Pedro Romero, Rubén Amezaga, Juan Alvarado, Cecilio Márquez, Amador Almasán, Santiago Gallardo, and an army informer and guide whose last name was Vargas.

Prisoners: Major Hernán Plata Ríos, Captain Eugenio Silva, soldiers Edgar Torrico Panoso, Lido Machicado Toledo, Gabriel Durand Escobar, Armando Martínez Sánchez, Felipe Bravo Siles, Juan Ramón Martínez, Leoncio Espinosa Posada, Miguel Rivero, Eleuterio Sánchez, Adalberto Martínez, Eduardo Rivera, and Guido Terceros. The last five were wounded.

In publicly announcing the first battle of the war, we are establishing what will be our norm: revolutionary truth. Our actions have demonstrated the integrity of our words. We regret the shedding of innocent blood by those who died; but peace cannot be built with mortars and machine guns, as those clowns in braided uniforms would have us believe. They try to portray us as common murderers. But there never has been, and there will not be, a single peasant who has any cause to complain of our treatment or our manner of obtaining supplies, except those who, as traitors to their class, served as guides or informers.

Hostilities have begun. In future communiqués we will set forth our revolutionary positions clearly. Today we make an appeal to workers, peasants, intellectuals, to everyone who feels the time has come to confront violence with violence and rescue a country being sold off in great slabs to Yankee monopolies, and raise the standard of living of our people, who grow hungrier every day.

National Liberation Army of Bolivia

Communiqué No. 2: To the Bolivian People

Revolutionary Truth against Reactionary Lies

April 14, 1967

On the morning of April 10, 1967, there was an ambush of an enemy patrol led by Lieutenant Luis Saavedra Arombal and made up mostly of soldiers from the Center of Instruction for Special Troops. In the encounter, the above lieutenant was killed as well as soldiers Ángel Flores and Zenón Prada Mendieta, and the guide Ignacio Husarima from the Boquerón Regiment was wounded and taken prisoner, along with another five soldiers and a lower level officer.

Four soldiers escaped and were able to warn Major Sánchez Castro at headquarters so he was able to send as reinforcements 60 men from a neighboring unit. They, too, fell into another ambush, which cost the lives of Lieutenant Hugo Ayala, noncommissioned officer Raúl Camejo, and soldiers José Vijabriel, Marcelo Maldonado, Jaime Sanabria, and two unidentified others.

In this action the wounded soldiers included Armando Quiroga, Alberto Carvajal, Fredy Alove, Justo Cervantes, and Bernabé Mandejara, who were taken prisoner with the Unit Commander, Major Rubén Sánchez Castro and 16 more soldiers.

In line with the norms of the ELN, we tended to the wounded as best as we could and set the prisoners free after explaining our revolutionary objectives.

Enemy losses amount to 10 killed, including two lieutenants, and 30 prisoners, including Major Sánchez Castro, six of whom were wounded. The spoils of war were proportional to enemy casualties and include a 60-mm mortar, machine guns, rifles, M-1 carbines and submachine guns, all with ammunition.

There was one casualty on our side that should be recorded with regret. The disparity in losses is understandable if one considers that it is we who have chosen the time and place of every combat. Moreover, the Bolivian army is sending off green soldiers, practically children, to be slaughtered.

Meanwhile, back in La Paz, the chiefs invent strategies and pound their chests in fake grief at demagogic funeral services, hiding the fact that they bear the guilt for the bloodshed in Bolivia.

They are now removing their masks and starting to call in US “advisers,” just as occurred in the beginning of war in Vietnam, which has drained the blood from that heroic people and put world peace in jeopardy. We do not know how many “advisers” will be sent against us (although we

will know how to confront them), but we warn the people of the dangers of this action by the military sell-outs.

We appeal to all young [Bolivian army] recruits with the following instructions: when the battle begins, throw your weapons to the ground and put your hands on your head. Remain still in spite of the gunfire, and never go to the front of the column when marching near combat zones. Make the officers who are inciting the conflict take those extremely dangerous positions. We will always shoot to kill the front line, and, as much as it hurts to see the blood of innocent recruits flow, this is one of the imperious requirements of war.

National Liberation Army of Bolivia

Communiqué No. 3: To the Bolivian People

Revolutionary Truth against Reactionary Lies

May 1967

On May 8, in the guerrilla-held zone of Ñacahuazú, there was an ambush of troops from a mixed company led by second lieutenant Henry Laredo. The above officer and students Román Arroyo Flores and Luis Peláez were killed, and the following prisoners were taken: José Camacho Rojas, Bolívar Regiment; Néstor Cuentas, Bolívar Regiment; Waldo Veizaga, noncommissioned officers school; Hugo Soto Lora, noncommissioned officers school; Max Torres León, noncommissioned officers school; Roger Rojas Toledo, Braun Regiment; Javier Mayan Corella, Braun Regiment; Néstor Sánchez Cuéllar, Braun Regiment—the last two were wounded after they failed to halt when intercepted. As always, prisoners were set free after our goals were explained. Seven M-1 carbines and four Mauser rifles were captured, and our troops escaped injury.

The repressive army has been issuing frequent communiqués announcing guerrilla casualties, mixing truth and fantasy. Desperate because of their impotence, they lie or vent their fury on journalists, who,

due to their ideological makeup, are natural adversaries of the regime, attributing to them all the problems they face.

We want it to be understood that the ELN of Bolivia is the only responsible party for the armed struggle, which its people lead, and which will not stop short until final victory is achieved. We will know how to punish all the crimes that have been committed in this war, independently of the reprisals our military command judges opportune to counter acts of vandalism by the repressive forces.

National Liberation Army of Bolivia

Communiqué No. 4: To the Bolivian People

Revolutionary Truth against Reactionary Lies

June 1967

Recently, the [Bolivian] army has acknowledged some of its casualties, suffered in clashes with reconnaissance missions and claiming, as usual, that they inflicted greater losses than they achieved in fact. Although we lack some reports from some patrols, we can state with assurance that our casualties are quite minimal and we have not suffered from any of the recent actions announced by the army.

Inti Peredo is a member of our army's general command and occupies the post of political commissar, and recent actions have been realized under his command. He enjoys good health and remains untouched by enemy bullets. The announcement of his death is a palpable example of the absurd lies being spread by the army in its impotence against our forces.

Regarding announcements of the supposed presence of combatants from other countries in the Americas, for secret military reasons and in light of our philosophy, that of revolutionary truth, we will not give figures. We can simply state that any citizen who accepts our minimum program, the liberation of Bolivia, is accepted into the revolutionary ranks with equal rights and duties as the Bolivian combatants, who naturally constitute the

vast majority of our movement. Every person who engages in armed struggle for the liberty of our homeland deserves, and will receive, the honorable title of Bolivian, independently of where they might have been born. That is how we interpret genuine revolutionary internationalism.

National Liberation Army of Bolivia

Communiqué No. 5: To the Bolivian Miners

Revolutionary Truth against Reactionary Lies

June 1967

Compañeros:

Proletarian blood is running once more in our mines. Over centuries, the blood of enslaved miners has been alternately sucked dry and then spilled, unleashing protest after protest.

In recent times the pattern has been temporarily broken and the insurgent workers were the main factor in the triumph of April 9.[1] This event brought hope of a new dawn, and that finally, workers would become masters of their own destiny. But the mechanisms of the imperialist world have been exposed—for those who are able to see clearly: that when social revolution is posed there can be no half measures. Either power is seized or achievements are lost, along with so much sacrifice and blood.

The armed militias of the mining proletariat were the only serious force at the beginning. They were then joined by militias made up of declassed sectors and the peasants. But these groups failed to recognize their essential community of interests and instead fell into conflict, a situation that was then manipulated by anti-plebeian demagogy. In the end, the professional army could reappear dressed in lambskin concealing its wolf's claws.

That army, small and easy to discount at first, was transformed into the armed instrument wielded against the proletariat and became imperialism's

most reliable accomplice. That is why imperialism gave the go-ahead for the military coup d’état.

Now we are recovering from a defeat provoked by the repetition of tactical errors by the working class, but also patiently preparing the country for a profound revolution that will transform the system from its roots.

False tactics must be avoided at all cost: heroic, yes, but not futile tactics that lead the proletariat into a bloodbath that depletes its ranks and neutralizes its most combative elements.

Over long months of struggle, the guerrillas have shaken the country, producing many casualties and demoralizing the Bolivian army while scarcely suffering any losses ourselves. After one encounter lasting several hours, in which they emerged victorious, this same army strutted around like a turkey over the proletarian bodies on the battlefield. The difference between victory and defeat depends on the choice of correct or erroneous tactics.

Compañero miner: don’t listen again to the false apostles of mass struggle who interpret this as the people marching forward, in compact formation, against the armed oppressors.

Learn from reality!

Heroic chests are of no avail against machine guns, and even well-built barricades cannot resist modern weapons of mass destruction. The struggle of the masses in underdeveloped countries, with a large rural base and extensive territories, must be carried out by a small and mobile vanguard, guerrillas who are well integrated among the people. This guerrilla force will gain its strength at the expense of the enemy army and catalyze the revolutionary fervor of the masses to the point where a revolutionary situation is created and state power can be overthrown in one single, well-aimed, opportune strike.

Let it be understood that we are not calling for total inactivity, rather that effort not be wasted on actions where success cannot be guaranteed. Pressure, however, must be continuously wrought by the working classes against the government, because that is what class struggle is about, with no limits. Wherever they may find themselves, a worker has the obligation to struggle with all their strength against the common enemy.

Compañero miner, the guerrillas of the National Liberation Army of Bolivia wait for you with open arms and invite you to join workers of the

underground already fighting alongside us. Here we are reconstructing the worker-peasant alliance that was broken by anti-plebeian demagoguery. Here we are converting defeat into triumph so that the lament of proletarian widows becomes a hymn of victory.

We await you.

National Liberation Army of Bolivia

Instructions to Urban Cadres

January 22, 1967

On January 22, 1967, Che noted in his diary that, because of the need to create a support network for the guerrillas, he had written some instructions for cadres who would work in the cities. Unforeseen circumstances, including the loss of Tania's (Tamara Bunke) cover, prevented those instructions from being distributed. As a result, they were never applied.

A support network of the character we want to create should be guided by a series of norms, which are summarized below.

Activity will be primarily clandestine in nature, but, it will be necessary, at times, to establish contact with certain individuals or organizations, requiring some cadres to surface. This necessitates a very strict compartmentalization, keeping each area of work quite separate from others.

Cadres should strictly adhere to the general line of conduct established by our army's general command and transmitted through leadership bodies, while at the same time, they will have full freedom in the practical implementation of this line.

To accomplish the difficult tasks assigned, as well as to ensure survival, cadres functioning underground will need to develop to a high degree the qualities of discipline, secrecy, dissimulation, self-control, and coolness under pressure; moreover, they will need to develop methods of work that will protect them in all eventualities.

All compañeros carrying out tasks of a semipublic nature will operate under the direction of a higher body that will be underground, and which

will be responsible for passing on instructions and overseeing their work.

As far as possible, both the leader of the network and those assigned to head up different tasks will have a single function, and contact between different areas of work will be made through the head of the network. The following are the minimum areas of responsibility for a network that has already been organized:

The head of the network, under whom are individuals with the following responsibilities:

1. Supplies
2. Transport
3. Information
4. Finances
5. Urban actions
6. Contacts with sympathizers

As the network develops, someone will need to be in charge of communications, in most cases working directly under the head of the network.

The head of the network will receive instructions from the leadership of the army, and will put these into effect through those in charge of the different work areas. The head of the network should be known only by this small leadership nucleus, to avoid endangering the entire network in the event of their capture. If those in charge of work areas know each other, then their work will also be known to each other, and changes in assignment need not be communicated.

In the event of the arrest of a key member of the network, the head of the network and all those known by the arrested person will take steps to change their residences or methods of contact.

The person in charge of supplies will be responsible for provisioning the army; this task is an organizational one. Starting from the center, secondary support networks will be created, extending all the way to ELN territory. In some cases, this could be organized exclusively through peasants; in other cases, it will include the aid of merchants or other individuals and organizations that offer their assistance.

The person in charge of transport will be responsible for transferring supplies from storage centers to points where the secondary networks will

pick them up, or, in some cases, for bringing them directly to the liberated territory.

These compañeros should carry out their work under a rock solid cover; for example, they can organize small commercial enterprises that will shield them from suspicion by the repressive authorities when the scope and aims of the movement become public.

The person in charge of information will centralize all military and political information received through appropriate contacts. (Contact work is conducted partially in the open, gathering information from sympathizers in the army or government, which makes the task particularly dangerous.) All information gathered will be transmitted to our army's chief of information. The person in charge of information for the network will function under dual lines of authority, being responsible both to the head of the network and to our intelligence service.

The person in charge of finances should oversee the organization's expenses. It is important for this compañero to have a clear view of the importance of this responsibility, because while it is true that cadres working under conditions of clandestinity are subject to many dangers and run the risk of an obscure and unheralded death, as a result of living in the city they suffer none of the physical hardships that the guerrilla fighter does. It is therefore possible for them to get used to a certain level of negligence in handling supplies and money that pass through their hands. There is also a risk that their revolutionary firmness will grow lax in the face of constant exposure to sources of temptation. The person in charge of finances must keep account of every last peso spent, preventing a single centavo from being dispensed without just cause. In addition, this person will be responsible for organizing the collection and administration of money from funds or dues.

The person in charge of finances will function directly under the head of the network, but will also audit the latter's expenses. For all these reasons, the person responsible for finances must be extremely steady politically.

The task of the compañero in charge of urban actions extends to all forms of armed action in the cities: elimination of an informer or some notorious torturer or government official; kidnapping of individuals for ransom; sabotage of centers of economic activity in the country, etc. All such actions are to be conducted under the orders of the head of the

network. The compañero in charge of urban actions is not to act on their own initiative, except in cases of extreme urgency.

The compañero responsible for sympathizers will have to function in public more than anyone else in the network. This person will be in contact with individuals who are not particularly firm, who clear their consciences by handing over sums of money or extending support while not fully committing themselves. Although these are people who can be worked with, it must never be forgotten that their support will be conditioned by the risks involved. Therefore, it is necessary, over time, to try to convert them into active militants, urging them to make substantial contributions to the movement, not only in money but also in medical supplies, safe houses, information, etc.

In this type of network some individuals will need to work very closely with each other; for example, the person in charge of transport has an organic connection with the compañero responsible for supplies, who will be his or her immediate superior. The person in charge of sympathizers will work with the head of finances. Those responsible for actions and for information will work in direct contact with the head of the network.

The networks will be subject to inspection by cadres, sent directly by our army, who will have no executive function but will simply verify whether instructions and norms are being complied with.

In making contact with the army, the networks should follow the following “route”: The high command will give orders to the head of the network, which will be responsible, in turn, for organizing the task in the important cities. Routes will then lead from the cities to the towns, and from there to the villages or peasant houses, which will be the point of contact with our army, the site of the physical delivery of supplies, money, or information. As our army’s zone of influence grows, the points of contact will get closer and closer to the cities, and the area of our army’s direct control will grow proportionately. This is a long process that will have its ups and downs; and, as in any war like this, its progress will be measured in years.

The central command of the network will be based in the capital; from there other cities will be organized. For the time being, the most important cities for us are: Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Sucre and Camiri, forming a rectangle surrounding our zone of operations. Those heading up work in

these four cities should, as far as possible, be experienced cadres. They will be put in charge of organizations similar to those in the capital, but simplified: supplies and transport will be headed by a single individual; finances and sympathizers by another one; a third person will coordinate urban actions; it is possible to dispense with the assignment of information, as this can be left to the head of the network. The coordination of urban actions will increasingly be linked to our army as its territory grows nearer to the city in question. At a certain point, those involved in urban actions will become semi-urban guerrillas, operating directly under the army's general command.

At the same time, it is important not to neglect the development of networks in cities that are today outside our field of action. In these places we should seek to win support among the population and prepare ourselves for future actions. Oruro and Potosí are the most important cities in this regard.

Particular attention must be paid to areas along the borders. Villazón and Tarija are important for making contacts and receiving supplies from Argentina; Santa Cruz is important for Brazil; Huaqui [Guaqui] or some other location along the border with Peru; and some point along the frontier with Chile.

In organizing the supply network, it would be desirable to assign reliable militants who have previously earned a living in activities similar to what we are now asking them to do. For example, the owner of a grocery store could organize supplies or participate in this aspect of the network; the owner of a trucking company could organize transport, etc.

Where this is not possible, the job of developing the apparatus must be done patiently, not rushing things. By doing so we can avoid setting up a forward position that is not sufficiently protected—causing us to lose it, while at the same time putting other ones at risk.

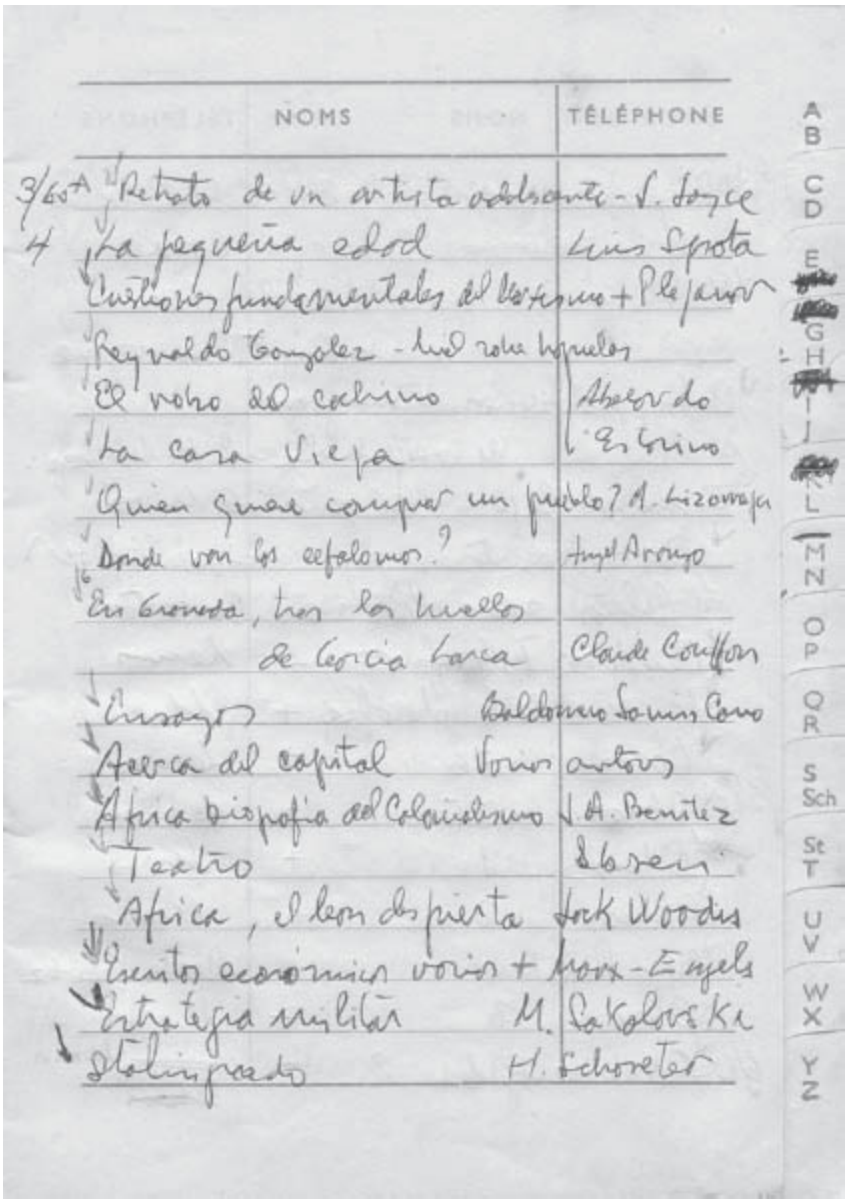
The following shops or enterprises should be organized: grocery stores (La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Camiri); trucking firms (La Paz–Santa Cruz; Santa Cruz–Camiri; La Paz–Sucre; Sucre–Camiri); shoemakers (La Paz, Santa Cruz, Camiri, Cochabamba); clothing shops (the same); machine shops (La Paz, Santa Cruz); and farms (Chapare–Caranavi).

The first two will enable us to store and transport supplies without attracting attention, including military equipment. The shoemaking and

clothing shops could carry out the twin tasks of making purchases without attracting attention and doing our own manufacturing. The machine shop would do the same with weapons and ammunition, and the farms would serve as bases of support in the eventual relocation of our forces, and would enable those working on the farms to begin carrying out propaganda among the peasants.

It should be stressed once again that all this requires political firmness and compañeros who take from the revolutionary movement only what is strictly essential to their needs, who are ready to devote all their time—as well as their liberty or their lives, if it comes to that. Only in this way can we effectively forge the network necessary to accomplish our ambitious plan: the total liberation of Bolivia.

Facsimiles of Che Guevara’s Notebooks (Cuba and Africa) 1965-66.



1. On April 9, 1952, the Bolivian miners led a popular uprising that overthrew the military dictatorship and installed the MNR government. Inspired by this event, Che wrote a poem that is included in Part One of this anthology.

Reading Lists 1965-67

This is a previously unpublished selection of Che's reading lists, recorded in notebooks he kept during his final years in Cuba, the Congo and Bolivia, revealing the breadth and depth of the personal study program he pursued throughout his life.

Notebook from Cuba and Africa

Page 1

3/65

Retrato del artista adolescente [A portait of the artist as a young man], James Joyce

La pequeña edad, Luis Spota

Cuestiones fundamentals del marxismo [Fundamental problems of Marxism], Plekhanov

Miel sobre hojuelas, Reynaldo Gónzalez

El robo del cochino, Abelardo Estorino

La casa vieja, Abelardo Estorino

Quien quiere comprar un pueblo? A. Lizarraga

Donde van los cefalomos? Ángel Arango

Granada, tras las huellas de García Lorca, Claude Couffon

Ensayos, Baldomero Sanín Cano

Acerca del Capital, Various authors

África, biografía del colonialism, J.A Benítez

Teatro, Ibsen

NOMS	TÉLÉPHONE
7/65 D El gobierno invisible	?
Población [illegible]	[illegible]
Historia de la antigüedad	Mishulin
Geografía económica	[illegible]
Historia de la edad media	Kosminsky
8/65 Obras escogidas T. IV +	Mao Tse Tung
Obras completas T. IV +	Martí
Obras completas T 33 +	Lenin
Obras completas T. 32 +	Lenin
Obras completas T. V +	Martí
Obras escogidas T II +	Lenin
Historia de los tiempos modernos	M. Efimov
9/65 Los diez [illegible]	[illegible]
Los problemas de la dialéctica [illegible]	Rosental
Historia de la época contemporánea	[illegible]
10/65 La Iliada	Homero
La Odisea	Homero
Manual de historia universal T. II	[illegible]
Edad ant. - Edad media	

NOMS	TÉLÉPHONE
10/65 La ciudad del diablo amarillo	Gorki
¿Quién ayudó a Hitler?	I. Maiski
Brasil, siglo XX	R. Foro
El batallón del [illegible]	Che
Historia de la filosofía T. I +	Hegel
486 días de lucha	[illegible]
[illegible] después de la colonización +	
[illegible]	
México insurgente	John Reed
Los principios fundamentales de la dirección	
de la guerra	Karl Clausewitz
Nosotros, los negros - J. Baldwin, [illegible]	M L King
El guerrillero y su trascendencia	F. [illegible] Coto
Desembarco en Normandía	
[illegible]	J. Onetti
La noche de los [illegible]	J. [illegible]
Amor [illegible]	[illegible]
Babbitt	Sinclair Lewis

NOMS	TÉLÉPHONE
8/66 Vida de Miguel Angel	G. Papini
La isla	J. Goytisolo
El Circo	Goytisolo
Dante Vivo	Papini
La Resaca	Goytisolo
Hamlet	Shakespeare
Carlos Marx +	Mehring
Contribución a la Crítica	
de la economía Política	Marx
La Ciudad	C. Richter
Así de grande	Edna Ferber
Informe de la misión cultural	a la R.A.U.
Paradiso	J. Lezama Lima
Julio César	Shakespeare
Cuentos completos	O.J. Cardoso
Nuevos cuentos cubanos	
Santa Juana	B. Shaw
Los [illegible]	[illegible]

NOMS	TÉLÉPHONE
La llamada de la Tierra	Adrian Bertrand
La ideología alemana +	Marx - Engels
Federico Engels +	E. Stepanova
Los años duros	Jesús Díaz
Poesía de Paso	Enrique Lihn
Reflejos en un ojo dorado	Carson McCullers
Reineke el zorro	Goethe
Las ceremonias del verano	Marta Traba
9/66 A través de los [illegible]	J.D. Salinger
Asesinato por anticipado	A. Correa
Correspondencia +	Marx - Engels
El sol poniente	Osamu Dazai
El libro [illegible] de Oz	[illegible]
Rashomon	R. A Akutagawa
Orlando	V. Woolf
Memorias de un marxista	M. Prieto
Por Marx	Althusser

Africa, el león despierta [Africa, The Lion Awakes], Jack Woddis

Escritos económicos varios [Various economic writings], Marx and Engels

Estrategia militar [Military Strategy], M. Sokolowski

Stalingrado, H. Schröter

Page 2

7/65

El gobierno invisible [The Invisible Government], David Wise and Thomas Ross

Patrice Lumumba, campeón de la libertad [Patrice Lumumba, Champion of Freedom]

Historia de la Antigüedad [History of Antiquity], Mishulin

Geografía Económica, Puchkov

Historia de la Edad Media, Kosminsky

8/65

Obras Escogidas, Tomo IV [Selected Works, Vol. 4], Mao Tse-tung

Obras Completas, Tomo IV [Collected Works, Vol. 4], [José] Martí

Obras Completas, Tomo 33 [Collected Works, Vol. 33], Lenin

Obras Completas, Tomo 32 [Collected Works, Vol. 32], Lenin

Obras Completas, Tomo V [Collected Works, Vol. 5], [José] Martí

Obras Escogidas, Tomo II [Selected Works, Vol. 2], Lenin

Historia de los tiempos modernos [History of Modern Times], N. Efimov

9/65

Los doce césares [The Lives of the Twelve Cesars], Suetonius

Los problemas de la dialéctica en El Capital [Problems in the Dialectics in *Capital],* Rosental

Historia de la época contemporanea [History of the Contemporary Epoch], J. Vostov and Zukov

10/65

La Ilíada [The Iliad], Homer

La Odisea [The Odyssey], Homer

Manual de Historia Universal, Tomo II [Manual of Universal History, Vol. II], Luis Suárez Fernández:

Edad Antigua-Edad Media

11/65

La cuidad del diablo Amarillo [City of the Yellow Devil], Gorky

¿Quién ayudó a Hitler? [Who helped Hitler?], I. Maiski

Brasil, siglo XX [Twentieth Century Brazil], R. Foco

El batallón de Belvedere, Chas

Historia de la Filosofía [History of Philosophy], Hegel

486 días de lucha, Azcárate y Sandoval

Le Congo depui la colonization Belga jusqui e la independence [read in French]

México insurgente [Insurgent Mexico], John Reed

Los principios fundamentals de la dirección de la Guerra [On War], Karl von Clausewitz

Nous les negres [read in French], J. Baldwin, Malcolm X, M.L. King

El guerrillero y su trascendencia, F. Solano Costa

Desembarco en Normandía

Cualquier corsario, J. Onetti

La noche de los asesinos, J. Triana

Aurora roja, Pío Baroja
Babbitt, Sinclair Lewis

8/66

Vida de Miguel Ángel, G. Papini
La isla, J. Goytisolo
El Circo, J. Goytisolo
Dante vivo, Papini
La Resaca, J. Gotytisolo
Hamlet, Shakespeare
Carlos Marx [Karl Marx], Franz Mehring
Contribución a la crítica de la economía política [Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy], Marx
La ciudad, C. Richter
Así de grande [So Big], Edna Ferber
Informe de la misión militar a la R.D.V.
Paradiso, J. Lezama Lima
Julio César, Shakespeare
Cuentos completes, O.J. Cardosa
Nuevos cuentos cubanos
Santa Juana [Saint Joan], G.B. Shaw
Los perros hambrientos, Ciro Alegría
La llamada de la tierra [The Call of the Soil], Adrien Bertrand
La ideología alemana [The German Ideology], Marx–Engels
Federico Engels, E. Stepanova
Los años duros, Jesús Díaz
Poesía de paso, Enrique Lihn
Reflejos de un ojo dorado [Reflections in a Golden Eye], Carson McCullers
Reineke el zorro [Reynard the fox], Goethe

Las ceremonias del verano, Marta Traba

9/66

Atrás de las líneas enemigas
Asesinato por anticipado, A. Correa
Correspondencia [Correspondence], Marx and Engels
El sol poniente
El libro fantástico de Oaj, Miguel Collazo
Rashomon, R. Akutagawa
Orlando, V[irginia] Wolf

10/66

Memorias de un mambí, M. Piedra
Por Marx, L. Althusser

Reading Plan for Bolivia

La historia como hazaña de la libertad, B. Croce

Los orígenes del hombre Americano, P. Rivet

Memorias de Guerra General, [Charles] de Gaulle

Memorias, Churchill

Fenomenología del Espíritu, Hegel

Le neveu de Rameu, Diderot

La revolución permanente [The Permanent Revolution: Results and Prospects], Trotsky

Nuestros banqueros en Bolivia, Margarita Alexander Marsh

El lazarillo de ciegos caminantes, Concolocorvo

Descripción de Bolivia La Paz 1946

El hombre Americano, Alcides D'Orbigny

Viaje a la América Meridional: Buenos Aires

El pensamiento vivo de Bolívar, Fombona

Aluvión de fuego, Oscar Cerruto

El dictador suicida, Augusto Céspedes

La Guerra de 1879, Alberto Gutiérrez

El Iténez salvaje, Luis Leigue Castedo

Túpac Amaru, el rebelde, Boleslao Lewin

El indoamericanismo y el problema racial en las Américas, Alejandro Lipschütz

Internacionalismo y nacionalismo, Liu Shao-chi

Sobre el proyecto de constitución de la R.P. China

Informe de la mission conjunta de las Naciones Unidas y organismos especializados para el studio de los problemas de las poblaciones indígenas andinas, ILO Geneva 1953

Monografía estadística de la población indígena de Bolivia, Jorge Pando Gutiérrez

Historia económica de Bolivia, Luis Peñaloza

Socavones de angustia, Fernando Ramírez Velarde

La cuestión nacional y el Leninismo [The National Question and Leninism], Stalin

El marxismo y el problema nacional y colonial [Marxism and the National and Colonial Problem], Stalin

Petróleo en Bolivia

Historia del colonialism, J. Arnault

Teoría general del estado, Carré de Malberg

Diccionario de sociología, Henry Pratt Fairchild

Heráclito, exposición y fragmentos, Luis Forie

El materalismo histórico en F. Engels, R. Mondolfo

Nacionalismo y socialismo en América Latina, O.Waiss

Contribución a la crítica de la filosofia del derecho de Hegel, Marx

Ludwig Feuerbach y el fin de la filosofia clásica alemana, Engels

El desarrollo del capitalism en Rusia, Lenin

Materialismo y empirocriticismo, Lenin

Acerca de algunas particularidades del desarrollo histórico del marxismo

Cuardernos filosóficos, Lenin

Cuestiones de leninismo, Stalin

La ciencia en la historia, John D. Bernal

La Lógica, Aristotle

Antología filosífica (La filosofia griega), José Gaos

Los pre-Socraticos. Fragmentos filosophises de los preocráticos, García Bacca

De la naturaleza de las cosas, Titus Lucretius Carus

El filósofo autodidactico, Abuchafar

De la causa, principio y uno, Giordano Bruno

El príncipe. Obras políticas [The Prince. Political works], Machiavelli

11/66

El embajador [The Ambassador], Morris West
Orient Express, Graham Greene
En la ciudad [In the City], William Faulkner
La legión de los condenados, Sven Hassel
Romanceros Gitano [Gypsy Romances], García Lorca
Cantos de Vida y Esperanza [Songs of Life and Hope], Rubén Darío
La lámpara maravillosa, Del Valle Inclán
El pensamiento de los profetas, Israel Mattuck
Raza de bronce, Alcides Arguedas
Misiones secretas, Otto Skorzeny
El cuento boliviano-selección [Selected Bolivian Stories]
La Cartuja de Parma [The Charterhouse of Parma], Stendhal
La física del siglo XX, Jordan
La vida es linda, hermano [Life is Beautiful, Brother], N. Hikmet
Humillados y ofendidos [The Insulted and Humiliated], F. Dostoyevsky
El proceso de Nuremberg, J. J. Heydecker and J. Leeb
La canditatura de Rojas, Armando Chirveches
Tiempo arriba, Alfredo Gravina
Memorias, Mariscal Montgomery
La Guerra de las republiquetas, Bartolomé Mitre
Los marxistas [The Marxists], C. Wright Mills
La villa imperial de Potosí, Brocha Gorda (Julio Lucas Jaimes)
Pancho Villa, I. Lavretski
La Luftwaffe, Cajus Bekker
La organización política [Political Organization], G.D.H. Cole
De Gaulle, Edward Ashcroft

12/66

La Nueva Clase, Milovan Djilas

El joven Hegel y los problemas de la sociedad capitalista [The Young Hegel and the Problems of Capitalist Society], G. Lukacs

Juan de la Rosa, Nataniel Aguirre [sic, por Aguirre]

Dialéctica de la naturaleza [The Dialectics of Nature], Engels

Historia de la Revolución Rusa, Tomo I [History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I], Trotsky

1/67

Categorías del materialismo dialectic, Rosental and Straks

Sobre el problema nacional y colonial de Bolivia, Jorge Ovando

Fundamentos biológicos de la cirugía, Clínicas Quirúrgicas de Norteamérica

Política y partidos en Bolivia, Mario Rolón

La compuerta N°. 12 y otros cuentos, B. Lillo

2/67

La sociedad primitive [Primitive Society], Lewis H. Morgan

Historia de la Revolucion Rusa, Tomo II [History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. II], Trotsky

La historia de la Filosofía, I Dynnik

Breve historia de la revolución Mexicana I, Jesús Silva Herzog

Breve historia de la revolución Mexicana II, Jesús Silva Herzog

Anestesia, Clínicas Quirúgicas de Norteamérica

3/67

La cultura de los Incas, Jesús Lara

Todos los fuegos el fuego, Julio Cortázar

Revolución el la Revolución [Revolution within the Revolution], Régis Debray

La insurrección de Túpac Amaru, Boleslao Lewis

Socavones de Angusta, Fernando Ramírez Velarde

4/67

Idioma nativo y analfabetismo, Gualberto Pedrazas J.

La economia argentína, Aldo Ferrer

En torno a la práctica, Mao Zedong

Aguafuertes porteños, Roberto Arlt

Costumbres y curiosidades de los aymaras, M. L. Valda de J. Freire

Las 60 familiares norteamericanas, Ferdinand Lundberg

5/67

Historia económica de Bolivia I, Luis Peñaloza

La psicología en las fuerzas armadas, Charles Chandessais

7/67

Historia económica de Bolivia II, Luis Peñaloza

Elogio de la locura [The Praise of Folly], Erasmus

8/67

Del acto al pensamiento, Henri Wallon

Fuerzas secretas, F. O. Nietzsche

Index

A

Acción Democrática, Venezuela 325
Acero, Rivers 480
Acuña, Juan Vitalio, *Vilo, Joaquín* 460, 471, 479
Africa 2, 5–717, 146, 148, 206, 212, 265, 303, 368, 369, 398, 412, 448–451, 494–495, 497, 517
Agencia Latina 169
agrarian reform 15, 18, 212, 237, 243, 263, 280, 289, 295, 306, 309, 349, 351, 359, 361, 388
Agüero, Joaquín de 260
Albizu Campos, Pedro 236, 238, 300
Alessandri, Arturo 53
Alfonso, Pedro Enrique 53
Algeria 6, 193, 265, 266, 295, 371, 408
Allende Gossens, Salvador 53
Alliance for Progress 2, 6, 18–19, 291, 298, 306, 308, 319, 325, 326, 328, 330–334, 336–340, 345, 348, 349, 350, 351, 353, 356, 357, 359–364, 372, 427
Alta Gracia 70
Althusser, Louis 500
Alvarado, Juan 482
Alvarado Marín, Carlos, *Merci* 465
Alvarado, Pedro de 121
Amazon 35, 120, 130, 206, 390
Americas 10, 16, 63, 69, 71, 78, 93, 94, 99, 120, 122, 130, 137, 138, 142, 143, 146, 159, 172, 178, 199, 211, 212, 231, 233, 234, 236, 237, 238, 241, 244, 245, 248, 249, 256, 257, 265, 276, 277, 278, 280, 281, 283–285, 289, 291, 292, 294, 296, 298, 300–304, 307, 308, 332, 333, 338, 341, 343, 345, 363, 364, 367, 368–371, 376, 382–384, 390, 396, 412, 413, 418, 421, 422, 447, 448, 453, 485
Andes, cordillera 52, 59, 87, 130, 251, 326, 390, 391, 407, 423
Antilles 303
Antofagasta 51
APRA 55, 144, 177, 325
Apurimac, River 130
Aquino Quispe, Apolinar, *Apolinario, Polo* 467
Araucana 99, 121
Árbenz, Jacobo 1, 3, 14, 15, 23, 84, 85, 128, 161, 164, 167, 171, 200, 224, 237, 247, 380, 405
Arciniegas, Germán 117
Arencibia Ayala, Walter 467
Arévalo, Juan José 128
Argentina 1, 3, 11, 15, 16, 28, 29, 30, 35, 52, 69, 70, 72, 76, 82, 86, 102, 143, 146, 154, 159, 169, 171, 172, 174, 197, 199, 211, 213, 215, 222, 229, 245, 263, 269, 270, 271, 272, 302, 321, 323, 339, 340, 343, 344, 362, 384, 385, 386, 389, 398, 404, 407–410, 431, 462, 466, 470, 476, 492

Argüello, Rosendo 80
Artime, Manuel 430
Asia 2, 5, 7, 17, 146, 147, 148, 206, 212, 265, 303, 368, 398, 412, 451
Atahualpa 60, 137
Avellaneda, Nicolás 106
Aymara 56, 390
Aymaras 55, 56, 390
Azaña, Manuel 145
Aztecs 96, 112, 200

B

Balaguer, Joaquín 357
Balmaseda, Radio 478
Banana workers 118
Bandung Pact 17, 205, 211
Barthe, Obdulio 82
Batista Zaldívar, Fulgencio 1, 3, 4, 5, 15, 21, 28, 78, 88, 144, 198, 199, 202, 203, 239, 241, 246, 251, 270, 278, 279, 289, 299
Bayo, Alberto 187
Bay of Pigs 5, 19, 298, 299, 300, 373, 391, 430, 431, 433, 437
Beberaggi Allende, Domingo 82
Beberaggi Allende, Walter 82
Béjar Rivero, Héctor, *Calixto* 458
Belgium 296
Belize 86, 303
Benavides, Miguel 260
Betancourt, José Tomás 260
Betancourt, Rómulo 245
Bingham, Hiram 61, 62, 139, 140, 141
Bolívar, Simón 10, 12, 139, 254, 484, 500
Bolivia 2, 3, 6–10, 13, 14, 21, 23, 28, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 78, 144, 152, 263, 281, 289, 308, 321, 340, 341, 384, 388, 390, 398, 405, 439, 448, 451, 452, 453, 457, 458, 460, 467–469, 475, 481, 482, 484–486, 488, 493, 495, 500–504
Bolivian Social Democratic Party 474
Bolsa Negra, mine 73
Boquerón, Regiment 483
Bosch, Juan 78
Bosch, León 81
Bravo, Douglas 453, 461
Bravo, Río 282, 291
Brazil 83, 86, 146, 154, 213, 229, 245, 263, 321, 322, 323, 337, 339, 340, 342–344, 348, 355, 364, 394, 395, 441, 452, 492, 498
Bresani, Dr. Salvador 64
Brigade 2506 437
Britain 147, 207, 234, 352, 383, 384
Buenos Aires 1, 11, 29, 77, 83, 93, 94, 171, 196, 203, 215, 337, 386, 461, 500
Bulgarian Democratic Republic 316

Bunke Bider, Haydeé Tamara, *Tania* 6, 7, 461, 462–464, 466, 488
Bustos, Ciro, *El Pelao*, *Carlos*, *Mauricio* 457, 462

C

Cabrera Flores, Restituto José, *Negro*, *Médico* 458
Cáceres Valle, Julio Roberto, *El Patojo* 379-382
Calancha, Father 139
Calderón Gómez, Juan 77
Calderón Guardia, Rafael Ángel 78
Camacho Rojas, José 484
Camagüey 249, 250, 251, 260, 261
Camiri 467, 471, 481, 492, 493
Campo Santo 37, 38
Canaima (God of the Amazon) 136
Caracas 12, 65, 66, 77, 144, 229, 230
Caranavi 493
Cárdenas, Lázaro 213
Caribbean 11, 80, 81, 117, 144, 172, 187, 220, 238, 279, 321, 340, 408, 410
Cartago 80
Castillo Armas, Carlos 83, 85, 86, 153, 224, 225
Castillo Chávez, José, *Paco* 467
Castro, Fidel 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 18, 28, 69, 88, 175, 196, 198, 199, 202, 205, 206, 207, 211, 217, 222, 227, 242, 246, 250, 253, 260, 270, 272, 276–278, 288, 313, 327, 369, 418
Castro, Raúl 200, 240, 299
Cates, John M. 319
Caupolicán 100, 122
Cayo Cruz 234
CDR (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) 399, 400
Central America 14, 15, 77, 104, 118, 189, 225, 383, 384, 395
Cervantes, Miguel de 99, 443
Chacaltaya 74
Chaco War 384, 388
Chamberlain, Neville 154
Chamorro, Joaquín 80
Chang, Juan Pablo, *Chino* 458
Chapare 493
Che Guevara Studies Center 10, 24, 41
Chiang Kai-shek 241, 295
Chile 12, 41, 43, 46, 47, 51, 52, 53, 86, 93, 94, 99, 101, 124, 126, 217, 229, 245, 263, 303, 321, 322, 323, 384, 386, 387, 388, 395, 396, 398, 408, 478, 492
China 5, 182, 187, 241, 243, 250, 251, 255, 256, 266, 316, 500
Chiquimula 83, 84, 154
Chocón 344
Choque Silva, Julio, *Chingolo* 467
Chorrillos 31
Chuquicamata 48, 50, 51, 52
CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) 1, 3, 5, 9, 15, 448, 457, 471

Cienfuegos, Camilo 1, 4, 5
CIES Conference (Punta del Este) 291, 300, 328, 337, 350, 357, 359, 364
Cieza de León, Pedro 96, 97, 187
Clausewitz, Karl von 366
Cochabamba 472, 475, 481, 492, 493
Codovila, Vitorio 461
Colombia 12, 41, 83, 154, 160, 281, 321, 390, 391, 392, 427, 429, 433, 434, 438, 452, 453
Columbus, Christopher 205
Concepción de la Pedraja, Octavio de la, *Moro, Morogoro, Muganga, Médico* 460
Congo 2, 6, 7, 21, 290, 295, 398, 448, 449, 460, 495, 498
Conte Agüero, Luis 220
COPEI 246, 436
Copello, Cardenal 172
Córdoba (Argentina) 70
Coronado Córdova, Benjamín 465
Cortés, Hernán 95, 96
Cortés, León 79
Costa Rica 69, 76, 78, 80, 81, 82, 160
Costa Rica Conference 249, 313
Cox, Robert 319
Cuba 1–9, 15–21, 23, 24, 28, 69, 78, 81, 111, 143, 159, 162, 173, 176, 180, 192, 193, 196, 198, 200, 201, 205–209, 212, 213, 215, 216, 218, 222, 225–229, 231, 232, 233, 238, 239, 240–255, 258, 260, 262, 263, 265, 268, 270, 271, 272, 274, 276, 278–284, 289, 292–299, 304, 306–323, 326–333, 336–348, 350, 351, 355–371, 373, 378–389, 391, 402–406, 412, 413, 428–431, 433–439, 441, 445, 449, 452, 458, 460, 463, 466, 468, 470, 473, 479, 495
Cuban revolution 5, 16–19, 21, 23, 174, 205, 224, 226, 238, 239, 241, 243, 244, 245, 247, 250, 262, 266, 267, 276, 277, 278, 284, 285, 288, 289, 290, 295, 300, 301, 314, 318, 319, 322, 327, 328, 332, 333, 342, 369, 373, 379, 385–388, 391, 394, 396, 405, 407, 413, 423, 435, 438, 454, 456
Cuzco 57–62, 76, 137, 138, 140, 390
Cyprus 193

D

Darío, Rubén 110
Debray, Jules Regis, *the Frenchman, Dantón* 457, 464, 471, 473, 474, 478, 503
Declaration of Havana 249, 253, 258, 259, 260, 296, 368, 369, 374, 375, 402, 410, 413, 415, 421, 427
Declaration of San José 253
Declaration of the 81 (Communist Parties) 370
Democratic Republican Union (URD) 246
Denmark 212, 234, 317
Department of State Security (DSE, Cuba) 383
Diario de la Marína 220, 242
Díaz, Carlos Enrique 84
Díaz de Dicon, María Teresa 215
Díaz del Castillo, Bernal 95
Díaz Lanz, Pedro Luis 246
Dillon, Douglas 291, 307, 308, 345, 347, 357, 362

Dominican Republic 224, 227, 228, 233, 298, 321, 352, 356, 357, 452
Dorticós, Osvaldo 246
Dubois, Jules 85
Dulles, Allen 231
Duvalier, François 223

E

Easter Island 43
Ecuador 14, 69, 104, 159, 281, 289, 321, 322, 339, 340, 384, 390, 391, 395, 427
Egypt 6, 146
Eisenhower, President Ike 5, 217, 227, 229, 230, 272
El Diario de Costa Rica 78, 79
ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Bolivia) 8, 458, 478, 481, 483, 485, 490
El Patojo 379, 380, 381, 382
El Salvador 80
Engels, Friedrich 187, 189, 420
Ercilla, Alonso de 99, 100, 101, 121
Espantoso, Beltrán 339
Europe 5, 67, 148, 153, 169, 212, 234, 265, 292, 307, 311, 412

F

Falange Socialista Boliviana 475
Fallas, Alfredo 77
Fallas, Carlos Luis 118
FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) 79, 200
Fernández Montes de Oca, Alberto, *Pacho, Pachungo* 465
Ferrer, Carlos, *Calica* 13
Figueres, José, Pepe 78
Florida 247
Formosa (Taiwan) 256
France 147, 234, 266, 317, 383, 420, 466
Franco, General Francisco 153
Frondizi, Arturo 172, 233, 337, 362

G

Gadea, Hilda 173
Gagarin, Yuri 304
Gaitán, Jorge Eliecer 433, 434
Gallardo, Santiago 482
García, Eduardo, Gualo 159
García Moreno, Gabriel 104
Gelman, Juan 466
German Democratic Republic 5, 316
Goethe 114, 121, 443, 499
Golfito 76
Gómez Carrillo, Enrique 110

Gómez Wangüemert, Luis 338
González Videla 46, 124, 125
Goodwin, Richard 355, 356
Granada 152, 153, 440, 495
Granado, Alberto 1, 3, 10, 12, 32, 33
Granado, Gregorio 30
Granado, Tomás 30
Grande, Río 39
Granma (cabin cruiser) 1, 4, 69, 88, 69, 201, 279, 288, 438
Grau San Martín, Ramón 81
Guanacaste 82
Guantánamo 299, 300, 330, 433
Guatemala 1, 3, 14, 15, 23, 28, 69, 80, 83, 84, 89, 93, 110, 128, 129, 143, 144, 145, 146, 152, 154, 155, 156, 159–167, 169, 170, 172, 189, 200, 208, 222, 224, 225, 237, 247, 269, 303, 333, 340, 371, 379, 380, 382, 396, 405, 427, 436, 445, 452, 453
Guatemala City 3, 84, 163
Guayaquil 123, 159, 160
Guevara de la Serna, Ana María 31
Guevara de la Serna, Celia 86
Guevara Gadea, Hilda Beatriz 88
Guevara Lynch, Ernesto 3, 29, 143, 146, 159, 466
Guevara Rodríguez, Moisés 458
Guizot, François 103
Guttmacher, Allan 235

H

Haedo, Eduardo 291
Hagerty, James 229
Haiti 162, 247, 254, 321, 352
Havana 4–10, 24, 208, 211, 213, 215, 234, 237, 249, 250, 253, 258, 259, 260, 269, 270, 274, 275, 279, 295, 296, 303, 323, 327, 365, 368, 369, 374, 375, 386, 398, 399, 402, 404, 410, 413, 415, 421, 427, 428, 437, 441, 464, 469, 470
Haya de la Torre, Víctor Raúl 111
Hernández, José 106
Hernández Osorio, Manuel, *Miguel*, 466
Higueras 96
Hikmet, Nazim 174, 502
Hitler, Adolf 153, 154, 498
Holst, Helena 82
Honduras 15, 80, 83, 84, 85, 154, 166, 303, 321
Huascar 137
Huayna-Capac 137
Huayna-Picchu 142
Hudson 131
Hungary 398

I

Ibáñez del Campo, Carlos 52
Iglesias, Joel 267
Illimani 70, 72, 73
IMF (International Monetary Fund) 18, 211, 212, 354
Inca Roca 60
Incas 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 75, 96, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142
INDER (National Institute of Sport and Recreation) 319
India 146, 212, 352
Indonesia 206, 212
Infante, Berta Gilda, *Tita* 86, 163, 166
INRA (National Institute of Agrarian Reform) 5, 379, 401
Intiwatana 60, 62, 141
Iran 147, 206
Iraq 206
Italy 147, 234

J

Jagüey 480
Japan 229, 230, 307, 344
Jiménez, Gustavo 275
Jiménez Tardío, Antonio, *Pedro, Pan Divino* 467
Jozami, Eduardo 462, 464, 466
Juárez, Benito 112, 254
Jujuy 37
Jujuy del Norte 29
July 26 Movement 4, 15, 69, 202, 391
Juramento, River 37

K

Kennedy, John F. 2, 6, 18, 291, 293, 295, 297–299, 338, 355, 356, 436, 437
Khrushchev, Nikita 327
King Jr., Martin Luther 498
Kolle Cueto, Jorge, *Kolly* 463, 464, 466, 467, 471, 478
Korea 5, 235, 295
Ku Klux Klan 256

L

La Cabaña, Military Department 215
La Cornisa 37
La Gioconda 42
La Higuera 479
La Mesa 203
Laos 295, 408
La Otilia 196
La Paz 7, 70, 71, 72, 74, 439, 459, 464, 465, 471, 474, 479, 483, 493, 500
Larrazábal 213

Las Casas, Roberto 441
Lautaro 99, 100, 122, 123
Lavalle, General 39
Lechín Oquendo, Juan 465
Leiva, Helena 156
Lenin, V.I 187, 189, 366, 416, 417, 443, 497, 501
Leoni, Raúl 470
León, Ithiel 352
León Torras, Raúl 345
leprosy (Hansen's Disease) 32, 64, 78, 131, 134, 389
Leticia 135, 136
Lezica 176, 177
Liberia 80, 82
Lima 76
Lima, Commander Turcios 453
Llibre, Antonio 196, 201, 203
López, Antonio, *Ñico* 82, 83
Loreto 34
Lozano, Dr. Hugo 478
Lukacs, G. 503
Lumumba, Patrice 290, 295, 448, 497, 517
Lynch, Raúl 176

M

Machín Hoed de Beche, Gustavo, *Alejandro* 460
Machu-Picchu 12, 61, 62, 63, 121, 137, 140, 141, 142
Malaysia, Malaya 193, 206, 398
Malcolm X 498
Malvinas (Falkland Islands) 302
Mama Ocllo 57
Managua 82, 225
Manco II 137
Mao Tse-tung 189, 241, 497, 504
Mapuche 45, 99
Marañón, River 130
Marshall Plan VIII, 227
Martí, José 10, 16, 20, 111, 199, 208, 253, 254, 292, 296, 302, 311, 417, 431, 443, 445, 451, 497
Martín, Américo 453
Martínez Tamayo, José María, *Ricardo, Papi* 465
Marucci, Peter 428
Marulanda 453
Marx, Karl 16, 177, 181, 187, 239, 419, 497, 499, 500, 501
Masetti, Jorge Ricardo 16, 196, 462
Matanzas 401
Matos, Huber 246
Matte Larraín, Arturo 53
Maximiliano 112

Mayas 93, 165, 484
Medrano 242
Méndez Korne, Julio César, *Ñato* 460
Mendoza, Colonel Miguel 85
Metán 36
Mexican revolution 112, 113, 396
Mexico 1, 3, 4, 15, 16, 28, 64, 69, 81, 83, 86–89, 94, 95, 112, 115, 129, 143, 146, 154, 162, 168–171, 173, 175, 177, 180, 200, 208, 209, 213, 239, 245, 254, 263, 274, 275, 321, 322, 323, 339, 340, 343, 379, 380, 382, 396, 398, 498
Miami 76, 242, 301, 432, 436
Middle East 227
Mikoyan, Anastas 239
Miró Cardona, José 246
Missile Crisis 433
MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario) 13, 486
Mojotoro, River 37
Molinas Luco, Dr. 46
Moncada, barracks 15
Monje, Mario 8, 457, 458, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 466
Monkey Point 431
Monroe Doctrine 234, 254
Montero, Iván, *Renán* 460
Montes, César 453
Montevideo 293, 358
Montúfar, Lorenzo 104
Monzón, Colonel Elfego 85
Mora Valverde, Manuel 78
Morley, Sylvanus Griswold 157
Moscoso, Teodoro 319, 320, 436
Movement of Nonaligned Countries 17, 205, 302
Muñoz, Honorio 350
Murillo, Pedro Domingo 71, 462
Mururata 73
Mussolini, Benito 154

N

Nasser, Gamal Abdel 206
Nehru, Jawaharlal 206
Neruda, Pablo 95, 110, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125
Netherlands 147
Nicaragua 14, 69, 80, 84, 85, 154, 225, 247, 254, 281, 321, 412, 429, 430, 431, 432, 436
Nixon, Richard 229
Nougués, Isaías 72, 75
Núñez de Balboa, Vasco 121

Ñ

Ñacahuazú 7, 459, 460, 473, 481, 484

O

OAS (Organization of American States) 6, 83, 217, 218, 227, 231, 233, 247, 291, 296, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 337, 369, 372, 431, 438, 452, 468
O'Higgins, Bernardo 254
Ojeda, Fabricio 453
OLAS (Organization of Latin American Solidarity) 8, 478, 511
Oliver, María Rosa 466
Ollantaytambo 60, 61
Oller, Luzmila 78
Onganía, Juan Carlos 476
Oppenheimer, Robert Julius 256, 297
Orellana 130
Orizaba 87
Oro, River 480
Ortega, Gregorio 355
Ovando Candia, Alfredo 473

P

Pacaru-Tampu 140
Pachacuti 140
Pachamama 53, 56
Padilla Nervo 176
Pakistan 212
Palacios (Argentina) 213
Panama 14, 69, 81, 82, 117, 130, 159, 160, 225, 252, 254, 281, 293, 302, 312, 321, 330, 384, 429, 430, 432, 433, 452
Panama Canal 14, 117, 252, 254, 330
Paraguay 245, 281, 357, 384, 388, 389, 408
Pareja Fernández, Walter 464
Pazos, Felipe 305
Pentagon 231, 255
Peredo Leigue, Guido Álvaro, *Inti* 459
Peredo Leigue, Roberto, Coco 459
Pérez Jiménez, Marcos 246
Peronism 12, 270, 511
Perón, Juan Domingo 52, 55, 72, 78, 171, 172, 511
Peru 12, 41, 64, 69, 72, 97, 130, 138, 139, 143, 144, 162, 174, 177, 187, 208, 281, 289, 293, 325, 339, 340, 352, 384, 389, 390, 398, 408, 427, 453, 458, 473, 476, 492
Petén 165
Petrohué 44
PGT (General Workers Party), (see Guatemalan Communist Party) 84, 85, 144, 162, 164
Picado, Teodoro 79, 80
Pinillas 154
Pisac 60

Pisani, Salvador 168, 170
Pius XII 256
Pizarro, Hernando 60, 121
Plata Ríos, Hernán 481, 482
PRA (Revolutionary Authentic Party) 474
Prensa Libre 220, 242, 481
Presencia 472
Prío 78, 80, 511
Prío Socarrás, Carlos 78, 80
Progreso (Costa Rica) 76
Pucará 480
Puente Uceda, Luis de la 453
Puerto Barrios (Guatemala) 83
Puerto Cabezas (Nicaragua) 431, 436
Punta del Este accord 336, 344, 347, 363
Punta del Este conference 19, 20, 337, 342, 351, 355, 356, 363, 511
Punta del Este, Uruguay 2, 6, 19, 20, 291, 328, 336, 337, 340, 341, 342, 344, 347, 349, 351, 355, 356, 358, 359, 363, 364, 435
Puntarenas 77, 82

Q

Quadros, Janio 217
Quechua 58, 59, 61, 62, 130, 137, 140, 390, 512
Quepos (Costa Rica) 77
Quevedo, Miguel Ángel 246
Quiroga, Facundo 102

R

Radio Rebelde 193
Radio Rivadavia 211
Raimondi, Antonio 138
Ramírez, Humberto 464
Rebel Army 1, 4, 5, 220, 267, 274, 279, 289, 512
Remón, Colonel 81
Republic of Czechoslovakia 251
Revilla, Dr. 74
Reyes, Alfonso 114
Reyes Rodríguez, Eliseo, *Rolando, San Luis* 460
Reyes Zayas, Israel, *Braulio* 468
Rhee, Syngman 223
Río de Janeiro 394
Río Pact 81, 512
Rivera, José E. 131
Rivero, José, Pepín 242
Robeson, Paul 256, 258, 297, 512
Rodó, José Enrique 291

Rodríguez, Juan 80
Rojas Toledo, Roger 484
Romero, Dr. Arturo 78
Roosevelt, Theodore 117, 167, 225
Rosario (Argentina) 30
Rossetti, Dr. 32
Ruiz Pineda 144
Russell 466, 469, 512
Russell, Bertrand 466
Russian revolution 277, 512

S

Sábato, Ernesto 269
Sacsahuamán 57, 58, 61, 138
Sáenz, Vicente 111
Sairy Túpac 138
Salinas Grandes 33
Salta 29, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40
Sanabria, Jaime 483
San Antonio de Areco (Argentina) 29
Sánchez Castro, Rubén 483
Sánchez Díaz, Antonio, *Marcos, Pinares* 465
Sánchez, Julio Dagnino, *Pacheco* 459, 463
Sánchez Mosquera, Ángel 197
Sandino 14, 145, 225, 258, 412, 512
Sandino, Augusto César 14, 145, 225, 258, 412
Sandoval, Gonzalo 95
San Francisco del Chañar 32
San Isidro 29
San José de la Dormida 32
San Juan 35
San Juan del Sur 82
San Martín 254
San Pablo, leprosy colony 130
San Salvador 86
Santa Cruz 492, 493
Santander 172
Santiago de Cuba 3, 5, 15, 298
Santiago del Estero 82
Santo Domingo 162
Santo Domingo, church of 59
Sarmiento de Gamboa 140
Sarmiento, Domingo F. 102
Sartre, Jean Paul 354, 466
Saudi Arabia 206
Second Declaration of Havana 368, 369, 374, 375, 402, 413, 415, 421, 427
Second Front «Frank País» 240

Security Council (UN) 167, 299
Serna Llosa, Celia de la 3, 16, 159, 166, 168, 169, 171, 175, 176, 177
Shakespeare, William 129, 443, 499
Shell 384
Sierra Maestra 1, 4, 18, 193, 194, 196, 198, 202, 203, 209, 216, 239, 240, 246, 247, 248, 251, 262, 267, 270, 271, 279, 288, 289, 318, 326, 376, 400, 423, 432, 449, 460
Siles Salinas, Adolfo 475
Socialist Republics of the Caribbean 80
Sol, Isla del 75
Solórzano, Carlos 129
Somoza, Anastasio, *Tacho* 77, 80, 154, 223, 224, 226, 251
Somoza, Luis 225
Sorí Marín 196, 197, 203
Sosa, Yon 453
South Africa 223
South America 52
Soviet Union 5, 6, 76, 83, 94, 239, 243, 250, 251, 255, 295, 296, 297, 316, 327, 397, 431, 439
Spain 12, 58, 95, 112, 122, 137, 143, 152, 234, 281, 383, 404, 407, 462
Spanish Republic 143
Spengler, Oswald 112
Stalin, Joseph 160, 187, 189, 501
Stamponi Corinaldesi, Luis Faustino 466
Standard Oil 384
Starkie, Robert 365
State Department (US) 278
Stevenson, Adlai 299, 436, 437, 438, 439
Stroessner, Alfredo 223, 357
Suárez Gayol, Jesús, Félix, el Rubio 465
Sukharno, Achmed 206

T

Tacna 64
Tahuantinsuyo 57
Tambomachay 61
Tampu-Toco 140
Tanti 31, 32
Tapachula 380
Tapia Aruni, Eusebio 467
Tegucigalpa 166, 167
Tiquet, José 274
Tiradentes 254
Titicaca, Lake 458
Tito Cusi 138
Toledo, Francisco 138
Torlinchen, Gustavo 74
Torres, Camilo 453
Torres, Edelberto 85, 110

Torres Gispena 86
Tragen, J. Irving 319
Traven, Bruno 115
Trejos, Dr. Alfonso 78
Trotsky, L. 500, 503
Trujillo 83, 224, 225, 227, 228, 251, 298, 356, 357, 513
Tucumán 35, 38, 39, 40, 72
Túpac Amaru 75, 138, 500, 503, 512, 513
Turquino Peak 202

U

Uaxactún 157
Ulate, Otilio 77, 79, 80, 81
Undurraga, Antonio de 99
UNESCO 317, 329
United Fruit (Company) 14, 15, 76, 78, 84, 117, 118, 128, 144, 160, 206, 384
United Nations (UN) 2, 20, 83, 167, 187, 231, 250, 255, 260, 266, 429, 430, 432, 438
United States 5, 15, 19, 22, 23, 53, 77, 79, 81, 84, 85, 104, 128, 143, 146, 147, 148, 149, 161, 162, 167–169, 189, 194, 199, 200, 207, 211, 216, 217, 225–230, 233, 234, 236, 248, 250, 252, 254–259, 265, 266, 284, 290, 292, 295, 298, 299, 300–303, 306, 307, 309, 311, 313, 314, 319–327, 329, 331, 333, 334, 338, 340–354, 357, 358, 362, 364, 372, 373, 383, 385, 389, 391, 396–399, 426, 429, 430, 432, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 451, 454, 456, 476
Urubamba 60, 121, 137, 138, 141, 142

V

Valdivia, Pedro de 122
Valle, Dr. Sergio del 209
Valparaíso 43, 44, 46, 52
Vasco de Gama 205
Vasconcelos, José 112
Vázquez, Fabio 453
Vázquez Viaña, Jorge, *Loro* 471
Vega, Garcilaso de la 56
Vega, José Manuel, *Cheché* 86
Vega, Lope de 99
Velazco Montaño, Julio, *Pepe* 467
Venezuela 12, 41, 82, 143, 144, 162, 166, 213, 244, 245, 246, 263, 315, 319, 320, 321, 325, 371, 392, 393, 398, 408, 427, 429, 430, 434, 435, 436, 436, 453, 468, 470
Ventura Ramos 82
Veracruz 87
Verde Olivo 216, 217, 219, 221, 223, 226, 228, 230, 232, 234, 236, 276, 366, 379
Vía Blanca 234
Vidora, Tiqui 70
Vietnam 6, 22, 295, 371, 408, 454, 469, 475, 484
Vilcanota, River 60
Vilcapampa 60

Villarroel 71
Villazón 70
Villegas Tamayo, Harry, *Pombo* 460
Villon, François 127
Viracocha 57
Virelles 196, 201
Vitcos 139
Vizcacha, Old 105

W

Wall Street 124, 212, 338, 364
Washington 5, 8, 19, 217, 218, 249, 254, 256, 257, 364
West Germany 344

Y

Yadarola 172
Yaguas 131, 132, 133, 514
Ydígoras 222, 223, 224, 226, 247
Young Rebels 267
Yucatán 165
Yugoslavia 212
Yungas 71

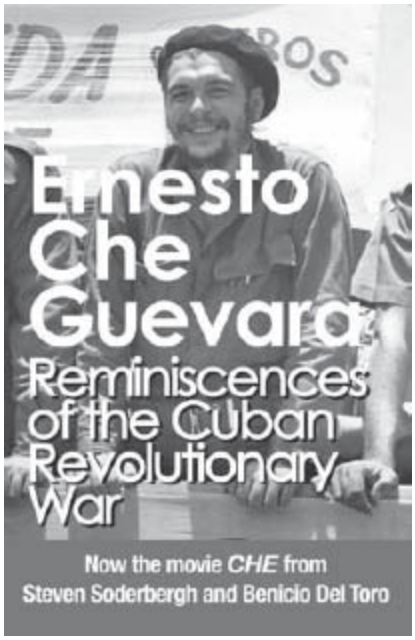
Z

Zachrison 83
Zapata, Emiliano 258
Zayas, Fernando de 260

ALSO FROM OCEAN PRESS

REMINISCENCES OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Ernesto Che Guevara



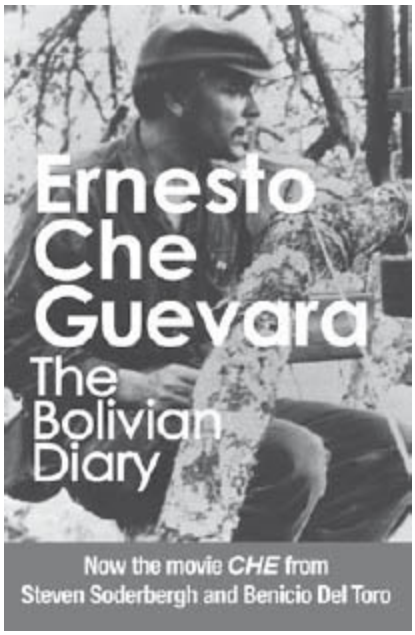
The dramatic art and acute perception of Che Guevara's early diaries blossom in this highly readable and entertaining account of the guerrilla movement against the Batista dictatorship that led to the 1959 Cuban revolution.

This new, thoroughly revised edition reveals how this revolutionary war transformed not just a nation struggling against appalling poverty and oppression but Che himself, who begins as troop doctor and ends as a guerrilla commander, who will become a world-famous revolutionary.

ISBN 978-1-920888-33-6 (paper) Also in Spanish ISBN 978-1-920888-36-7

THE BOLIVIAN DIARY

Ernesto Che Guevara



This is Che Guevara's famous last diary, found in his backpack when he was captured by the Bolivian army in October 1967. It became an instant international bestseller after his death, catapulting Che to iconic status throughout the world.

Newly revised by Che's widow (Aleida March), and including a thoughtful preface by his eldest son Camilo, this is the definitive account of the attempt to spark a continent-wide revolution in Latin America.

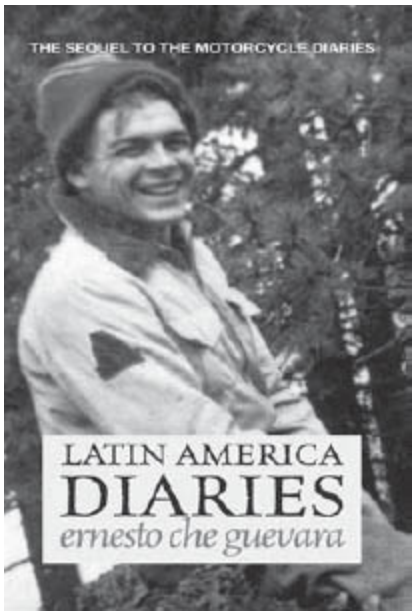
"Thanks to Che's invariable habit of noting the main events of each day, we have rigorously exact, priceless, and detailed information on the heroic final months of his life in Bolivia." **—Fidel Castro**

ISBN 978-1-920888-24-4 (paper) Also in Spanish ISBN 978-1-920888-30-5

LATIN AMERICA DIARIES

"Otra Vez" or Once Again: The sequel to *The Motorcycle Diaries*

Ernesto Che Guevara



This is Ernesto Guevara's journal of his second trip through Latin America, revealing the emergence of a revolutionary now called "Che."

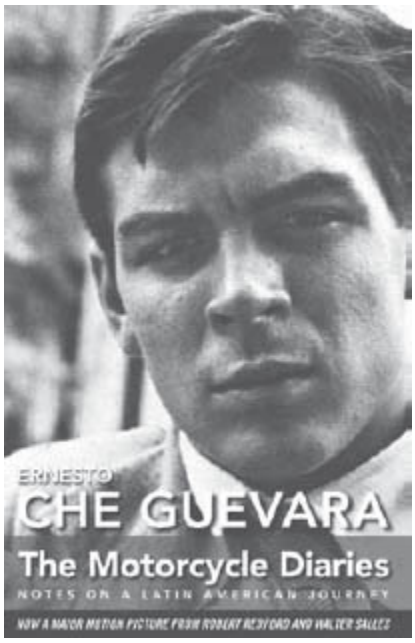
It includes letters, poetry and journalism that document his return to exploring the continent of Latin America following his graduation from medical school in 1953. After leaving his native Argentina, Ernesto revisits Machu-Picchu in Peru, witnesses the aftermath of the 1952 Bolivian revolution and is deeply affected by his experience in Guatemala during the 1954 US-inspired coup. He flees to Mexico where he encounters a group of exiled Cuban revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro, marking the beginning of a political partnership that profoundly changes the world and Che himself.

ISBN 978-0-9804292-7-5 (paper) • ISBN 978-0-9870779-7-4 (e-book)
Published in Spanish as *Otra Vez* 978–1-920888–78-7

THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

Notes on a Latin American Journey

Ernesto Che Guevara



The book of the movie of the same name by Walter Salles starring Gael García Bernal.

The young Che Guevara's lively and highly entertaining travel diary features exclusive, unpublished photos taken by the 23-year-old Ernesto on his journey across a continent, and a tender preface by Aleida Guevara, offering an insightful perspective on her father—the man and the icon.

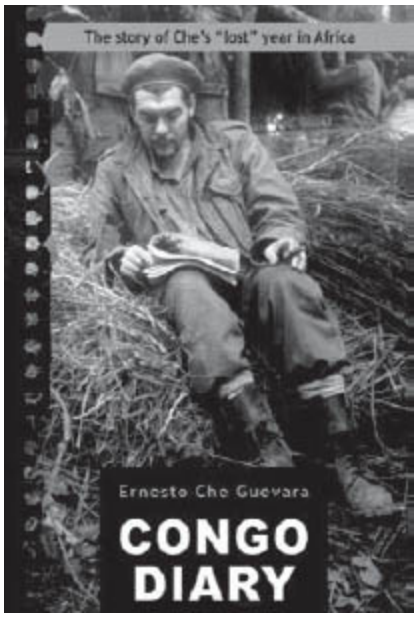
"A journey, a number of journeys. Ernesto Guevara in search of adventure, Ernesto Guevara in search of America, Ernesto Guevara in search of Che. On this journey of journeys, solitude found solidarity, I turned into we." **— Eduardo Galeano**

ISBN 978-1-876175-70-2 (paper) • ISBN 978-0-9870779-5-0 (e-book)
Also in Spanish ISBN 978-1-920888-11-4

CHE CONGO DIARY

The Story of Che Guevara's Year in Africa

Ernesto Che Guevara



Che Guevara's disappearance from Cuba in 1965 aroused much speculation. In preparation for the fateful Bolivian mission, Che led a secret Cuban force to aid the liberation movement in the Belgian Congo (later known as Zaire) after Patrice Lumumba was assassinated there.

Unpublished for decades because of its controversial content, this account of Che 's "lost" year in Africa reflects his great literary gift, his characteristic insightfulness, his dry wit and brutal honesty.

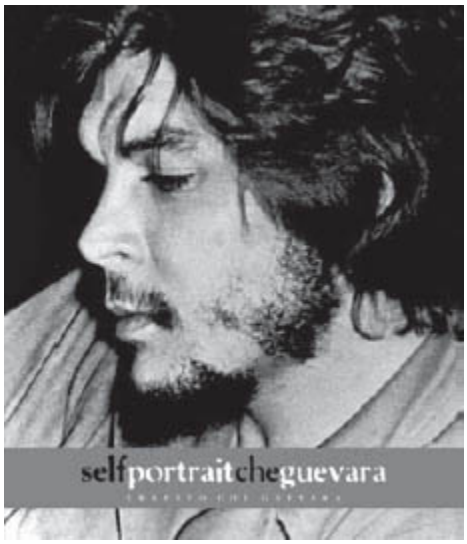
"Che Guevara's feats in our continent were of such magnitude that no prison or censorship could hide them from us. His life is an inspiration for every human being who loves freedom. We will always honor his memory." **—Nelson Mandela**

ISBN 978-0-9804292-9-9 (paper) Also in Spanish ISBN 978-1-920888-79-4

CHE: A SELF-PORTRAIT

A Photographic and Literary Memoir

Ernesto Che Guevara



A remarkable photographic and literary memoir offering an intimate look at the man behind the icon that draws on the rich seam of diaries, letters, poems, journalism, and short stories Che Guevara left behind in Cuba.

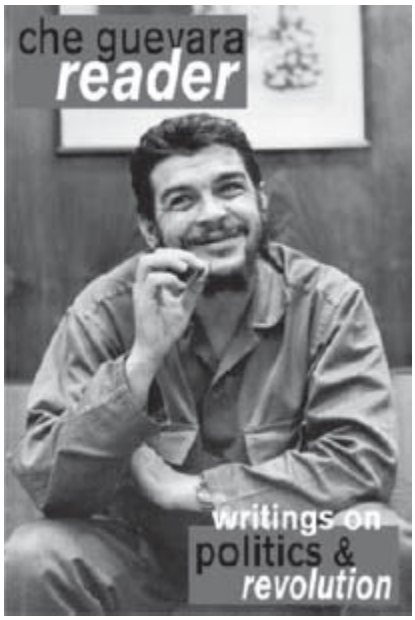
Compiled using exclusive material from his family's private archives, this is unique among the many books about Che Guevara revealing, for the first time, Che's personal world—his extraordinary candor, his irony, dry wit and great passion.

"This beautiful, enlightening volume humanizes Che." ***—Rain Taxi***

ISBN 978-1-876175-82-5, photos throughout, (paper)
Also in Spanish ISBN 978-1-876175-89-4

CHE GUEVARA READER

Writings on Politics and Revolution



This bestselling anthology features the most complete selection of Che Guevara's writings, letters, and speeches available in English. Far more than a guerrilla strategist, Che Guevara made a profound and lasting contribution to revolutionary theory and Marxist humanism, as demonstrated in this comprehensive book.

The *Che Guevara Reader* includes essays on the Cuban revolutionary war and guerrilla warfare, Che's analysis of the first years of the Cuban revolution (in which he played a major role) and his vision for Latin America and the Third World.

ISBN 978-1-876175-69-6 (paper) Also in Spanish ISBN 978-1-876175-93-1

CHE: A MEMOIR

Fidel Castro

In this unique political memoir, Fidel Castro writes with great candor and emotion about a historic revolutionary partnership that changed the face of Cuba and Latin America. Fidel creates a vivid portrait of Che Guevara—the man, the revolutionary, and the intellectual—revealing much about his own inimitable determination and character.

This fascinating memoir includes Fidel's speech on the return of Che's remains to Cuba 30 years after his assassination in Bolivia in 1967, and provides a frank assessment of the Bolivian mission.

ISBN 978-1-920888-25-1 (paper) Also in Spanish ISBN 978-1-921235-02-3

Ocean Press
www.oceanbooks.com.au